



Inevitable by **Connie Hooper**

Category: IT

Genre: Friendship, Horror

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-10-06 16:51:42

Updated: 2019-12-08 17:34:30

Packaged: 2019-12-12 05:41:37

Rating: M

Chapters: 8

Words: 39,679

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Alex returns to Derry with her daughter, Agata, when she sees a reluctant way out of the expensive city life. Everything seems to be going well for both of them: Agata has good friends for the first time, Alex gets a job - but when Alex starts having memories of her childhood in Derry back in 1962, she realizes that IT doesn't like when IT'S meal escapes. Richie/OC by poll voting.

1. Two Rays Arrive in Derry

Okay so, I know I have my story 'Breeze' but I wanted to write a story for the IT fandom for a really long time now.

There's something I need to clear though: I haven't read the book yet, but I am starting to! I bought it :) But I can only read so little each day because of my job. I hope you still enjoy it!

Cast:

Alexandra Ray: Vera Farmiga [As a brunette]

Agata Ray: McKenna Grace [As a child, in her role in *Annabelle Comes Home*]

July 25th, 1988

Monday

New York City

Alexandra's POV

It was still dark out when her alarm blared to life at five o'clock in the morning. Alexandra, a thirty-five-year-old single mom, groaned as she rolled over to hit the snooze button on her clock. She fell back onto her pillow and stretched like a cat after being curled up in the same position for too long.

After five minutes, slowly, she opened her light blue eyes and allowed them to adjust to the darkness. Alexandra didn't want to get out of bed after her late-night shift, waitressing on the seafood restaurant with a handsy manager but last night had her final shift so least she could be happy about that.

But she needed to make money so she could pay the bills and ensure a safe life for her Agata – her twelve-year-old daughter – or at least that was what she told her body when she climbed out of bed to prepare everything to leave.

It wasn't like there was a lot to do. Alexandra spent her free time to help the moving company she hired to place her belongings and

furniture securely inside their truck. She looked around her bedroom, and aside from the old bed with the squeaky mattress that had too many lumps that she was leaving behind in the apartment, Alexandra only eyed the alarm clock with interest because that was the only object in the room that she had yet to pack. Well, besides some of her clothes.

Seeing her apartment empty was strange for the single mom, she struggled so much to fill it by herself and try to make it cozy for her daughter – but now her hard work could be left behind thanks to sudden death in the family.

After the lukewarm shower she took to wake herself up, Alexandra tossed her shoulder-length light brown hair into a ponytail and dressed up in her pleated, high-waisted jeans, her A-line tank top, and her well-worn oversized jean jacket that she as kept from her teenage years. It was fantastic that it still fit her.

When the time for her daughter's alarm clock was nearing to blare as well, Alexandra couldn't help but feel anxious about moving back to Derry. She loved living in New York, it's where she was born, but it was too expensive and even though she was sheltering Agata from the fact that almost every month Alexandra struggled to pay everything on time and had to skip some meals so her daughter could eat, Alexandra saw her lucky opportunity to move somewhere cheaper. Even though it broke her heart to leave New York, Agata was more important.

Her parents died when she was five years old, and Alexandra also lost her unborn baby brother because her mom had been pregnant when the truck collided with their car. At the time, Alexandra had been playing in her kindergarten, unaware.

Her only living relative at the time had been her estranged paternal grandfather that lived in Derry. Alexandra doesn't remember much of her childhood there, but she sometimes has recurring nightmares of a building burning, people inside of it screaming for help and a clown.

She also remembers a little of how badly and grandfather had cared for her – Alexandra basically became independent during her childhood to survive. It was strange, she didn't remember her parents

that well because she was so young when she lost them but when it came to Derry, the town where she lived until she was sixteen, Alexandra had almost no memories. And the ones she had were all foggy.

It was probably for the best. Maybe her brain was protecting her from terrible memories of her grandfather.

A month ago, Alexandra got a phone call informing her that her grandfather died in his sleep and that shockingly, he left his house to her. She didn't know why – she had run away and he was never caring towards her so the whole ordeal seemed too good to be true.

But the voice on the phone assured her that the house was now hers.

Alexandra made the decision to keep it.

Agata, her daughter with a gentle and sensitive nature, didn't have friends apart from a girl in her class named Sophie. The two weren't best friends though, Alexandra knew that they just talked to each other at school and occasionally played together. But that was it. With no friends, Agata showed no complaint when her mom told her that they were moving to a small town.

But Alexandra wondered if her daughter was really fine with leaving.

Agata's POV

5:45 AM

The twelve-year-old blinked her blue eyes open blearily and sat up in bed, an instant sleepy smile crossed her lips when Duncan, her three-year-old German Shepard dog, quickly rose his head to stare at her as he lied at the end of her bed. Duncan always slept in her bed and Agata felt safer with him around.

Outside her window, she saw a perfect summer morning, fresh, bright and sparkling, "Good morning Duncan," she softly greeted him before stretching her limbs as she yawned at the same time. Duncan followed soon after, making her giggle.

However, Agata let out a startled gasp when her alarm clock suddenly started to ring – it seems that she had woken up just seconds before it was time for her to wake up with it. Sighing, and feeling her heart hammering quickly just for that little scare, Agata pushed the snooze button and pouted towards her dog companion.

"I need to stop scaring myself like that, boy," The brunette said before throwing the cotton sheet off her body and hopping out of bed. Duncan soon did the same, his tail wagging when Agata began petting his head, "Good boy, Duncan."

Duncan whined happily as he sat down for more pats, Agata was short for her age so even when he sat down, Duncan's head reached her chest. The petting was interrupted when her mom opened the door and smiled warmly at the sight of her daughter awake with Duncan.

"Good morning sweetie," Alexandra smiled, "Sleep well?"

"Yeah, I did," Agata told her before taking a second look at her mom, "Oh, you're already dressed" she realized.

Alexandra nodded, "We need to leave in less than an hour to reach Derry by lunchtime, don't forget it's a seven-hour ride."

Agata looked back at her alarm clock and saw that it was nearly six in the morning, "Oh" ever since summer vacation began, Agata would usually only wake up at eleven or noon due to her late-night reading or insomnia, but surprisingly she woke up fairly early today.

While Alexandra took Duncan for a walk to the park before they began their road trip to Derry, Agata showered and got dressed. Before sending her clothes to Derry, her mom told her to choose an outfit for her to use during the road trip and Agata opted for a white pleated skirt that reached her knees, a lilac V-neck t-shirt that she tucked inside the skirt and her aqua-colored ballet flats.

Agata then placed her silver necklace and her simple bead bracelet. She then brushed her teeth and afterward, she combed her long brown hair with wavy tips and decided to let it loose for today. She waited for her mom to return with Duncan inside her bedroom,

grabbing her 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' book and placing it on her lap to read during the car ride.

When her mom arrived, they all put the rest of the belongings, such as their pajamas, alarms clocks, and Duncan's dry food, in a duffel bag. They didn't have much furniture either so everything was able to fit inside the moving truck.

When it was time to leave, Agata and her mom took one last look inside their small apartment, filled with mold on the ceiling, leaks during raining and windows that didn't open – but it was still home, it had been the place where Alexandra raised her daughter since she was two years old and it was good enough to have sheltered them for ten years.

"Goodbye New York," Agata sighed meekly before walking out into the building's corridor.

No one's POV

8:34 AM

Alexandra didn't remember how her grandfather's house looked like but she hoped it wouldn't look too empty once they arrive there.

They have been on the road for two hours now and she smiled at the sight of her daughter sleeping on the backseat while Duncan lied next to her, placing his head protectively on her thigh.

Every since they were robbed two years ago while they were out grocery shopping, Alexandra swore to never let it happen again and even though she changed her lock – she was not satisfied. It cost her a lot of money but she doesn't regret getting Duncan to protect the house. She got the German Shepard when he was about to turn one year old but the guy that sold him to her assured that he had been well trained.

And Alexandra was relieved she hadn't been wronged by the man.

Duncan was amazing and fiercely loyal. He also guarded Agata and whenever Alexandra had to go on a quick trip to a mini-market at a

certain hour of the night, taking Duncan with her made her feel much safer.

Alexandra enjoyed taking scenic routes such as the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, and Interstate eighty-four passing Old Sturbridge, a quintessential New England town.

12:33 PM

Four hours into the trip, Agata woke up disoriented and with no memory of falling asleep as her mom was passing by Boston, and soon Alexandra realized she'd have to stop by a gas station to re-fill her gas and buy something for the two to eat.

Agata never complained about being hungry, she knew better than to bring up the sensitive topic such as having enough food to eat to her mom.

They ended up stopping by a rustic old-style diner, simply named Brunswick Diner. From the outside, it looked like a simple, small, red farmhouse. Inside was a time warp, replete with table-side jukeboxes and small wrap around coffee counter. It established itself in ninety twenty-two next to a gas station that was also run by the family. It had been Agata's first time in a diner and Alexandra had a sudden memory of working in one as well when she was a teenager, it was strange that she only remembered about it as soon as the greasy smell of fries and the strong scent of coffee hit her nostrils.

The food took a while to get to them, a true sign of made to order. Both ordered the French toast and sausage links with two strawberry smoothies. The French toasts had a nice cinnamon crunch to them, perfect to smother with butter and drizzle with syrup, and the sausage snapped through its natural casing as Alexandra cut and bit into it, releasing great savory flavors to counter the sweetness.

She was relieved to see Agata eat so well, the girl was so full that she didn't even want dessert.

Alexandra always knew her daughter was special, as all good mothers think of their child, but what type of kid her age refuses to order dessert even after being full? She hoped that Agata could enjoy the

little things about being a child as long as she could like Alexandra did.

When she ran away from Derry, and even though she was homeless, the brunette traveled around the country by taking car rides from strangers, befriended people that offered her their couch temporarily and just enjoy life without any money until she returned to New York and started her own life there.

After paying the bill and leaving a satisfying tip, the girls let Duncan out for a while for him to stretch his legs and Agata filled his traveling bowls with some food and water. After Duncan had his exercise and had his own stomach filled, the small family hit the road again.

1:50 PM

They got stuck in a traffic jam on the outskirts of a town called Ludlow, but they were already in Maine. Duncan was again, resting his head on his girl's laps as Agata looked at the forest surrounding the small road.

Alexandra sighed, she knew the entrance of Derry would show up at any moment but it wasn't because of the traffic she was feeling slightly anxious. She was used to traffic, she was a New York driver. It was because of an itch that began covering her nape.

She even thought it was a bug that had somehow crawled inside the car and then her, but even though she has scratched the back of her neck plenty of time, it would not go away. Her reasonable side told her that maybe the diner's food awoke some kind of temporary allergic reaction from her skin.

Its often said that if you have a bad feeling about something, you should follow that intuition. But Alexandra's anxiety about moving back to Derry made it very hard for her to listen to it. If she had, Alexandra would have turned her car around and return to New York.

But if she had done that, then she wouldn't have indirectly helped the Losers Club to defeat Pennywise.

So Alexandra shook it off, thinking she was jumping to conclusions.

After thirty minutes into slow traffic and talking to Agata about how exciting it was for them to begin a new life, her daughter suddenly pointed at a road sign for Derry – and the two couldn't help to let out a relieved chuckle before Alexandra turned on her indicator lights to warn the car behind her that she was going to turn, and when she did, the traffic was left behind as Alexandra had to road to herself while making her way towards Derry.

Derry, Maine

Moore House, 7 West Broadway

2:30 PM

No one's POV

Before becoming Alexandra Ray, she was born a Moore. That had been the last name of her late dad, and her paternal grandfather. Albert Moore passed away at the age of eighty-five during his sleep, at least that is what Alexandra was told. What she didn't know was that he had created a reputation for himself in Derry, a really bad one.

Everyone in the small town called him Devil Moore behind his back and both children and adults avoided his house like the abandoned one on Neibolt Street. There were rumors he was possessed by the devil but the one that was more popular amongst the youth was that he used to kill children and keep them buried inside his basement.

That's why when the news of his death spread faster than a common cold across Derry, no one seemed to mourn him. Sure, there was a ceremony for him but only the people who were nice enough to show up and leave a flower in his grave showed up.

Albert's death was forgotten when the rumor that his granddaughter was returning to live in his house began. No one could believe that Albert had left his house to her – even though she left Derry nineteen years ago and never returned, some of the residents in Derry that still remember her or even went to school with the infamous Devil

Moore's granddaughter were surprised that he had done something nice such as leaving his house for her.

That's why when Alexandra Ray parked her pale blue AMC Gremlin in front of the infamous ugly yellow-colored house.

Alexandra turned off the engine and stared with distaste at the front yard, the lawn was dry and weeds could be seen outgrowing around the foundation around the small, two-story house. There was also some dirt patches randomly spread around the lawn, and Alexandra was suddenly hit with a memory of her trying to plant an apple tree in the backyard, hidden behind the shed where sometimes her grandfather would lock her in for hours when she misbehaved.

She gasped shakingly and gripped on her steering wheel tightly as she heard her eight-year-old self begging her grandpa to let her out.

"Please grandpa, please! There's a scary monster after me! It told me it was going to eat me! Let me out"

"Shut you lying bitch! You're going to stay there all night if you don't shut up about seeing demons!"

"Mom? Are you okay?"

Agata's gentle tone brought her mom back from the trance of her forgotten past, and Alexandra quickly took a few deep breaths before plastering a smile on her face to look at her from her seat.

"I'm fine honey, just felt a little overwhelmed because of the yard's state," she said with a long sigh, "But, I guess what my little summer project will be!" Alexandra told her with a smile.

Agata smiled back, unaware of her mom's dark memories.

Future chapters will be longer. And please if you can, leave a review! I'd like to know what you think.

2. There's a First Time For Everything

A/N: I am not, in any way, homophobic or hateful towards people in the LGBTQ community, I myself am in it. But for the sake of the plot and because this story happens in the late '80s, there will be some homophobic slurs that I don't approve of.

I will put a warning at the beginning of a chapter that will be filled with triggering words that carry homophobia or hatred towards queer people.

Also, when I'm writing the thing that I dislike the most is writing characters meeting each other. I just think I write it too awkward or out of character, especially in this fandom since I haven't read the book yet. I'm sorry in advance for that.

And I hope I wrote Bill's stuttering well enough, that concerned me as well.

July 29th, 1988
Bay Village, Boston

No one's POV

Daniel Wright, a thirty-seven-year-old man, sighed as he stared into the tall buildings of Boston. Daniel was a tall, lanky man, with a handsome face, doe brown eyes, and a shaggy dark-blonde hair with curly tips. He looked younger than he was and he was also often ogled by young girls whenever he walked inside his classroom in New Mission High School.

Daniel knew that his students stared, and while he was flattered, he was smart enough to keep himself out of their reach or simply shut down their hormonal flirting with a goofy remark.

He had a serious expression on his usually beaming face as he guided his cigarette into his mouth for a long inhale from it, and the reason for that was because, during his sleep, he dreamed of a woman he hasn't seen in twelve years.

Alexandra Moore.

Daniel always wondered what happened to the last woman he ever dated. The woman that had caught him in bed with someone. Daniel still regrets ending his almost two-year relationship in a terrible manner, but if he was being honest with himself, he had been relieved she finally caught him. The guilt that he had carried from cheating on her for seven months was eating him alive and even though breaking up with her right away had been something Daniel wanted to do, he was forced to remain in a relationship with a woman just to please his father.

Daniel was gay. And his father was extremely homophobic.

When Alexandra caught him having sex with Kyle Higgins, a man three years older than him that twelve years ago also hid inside the closet and had married a woman to make his family happy, Daniel thought he was a goner. He thought that Alexandra would vengefully tell his father about what she witnessed – but to this day, even when he ran away from his old life to become someone new, he regretted thinking so lowly of her.

Alexandra had been so nice and caring and he hated himself every time she would tell him how much she loved him. How lucky she had been to find him – and while she said those sweet nothings, he always thought about Kyle Higgins and his bright blue eyes looking at him.

Blue eyes, just like Alexandra's. Maybe that's why he chose her.

Daniel frowned as he watched the smoke of the cigarette come out of his mouth and dissipate into the warm air of Boston.

He hasn't spoken to his father in twelve years and Kyle Higgins, who Daniel still sees twice a month in a very secretive way (and always ends with him feeling like shit for sleeping with a married man), was still married, with two kids nonetheless.

Daniel smirked sourly before dragging another inhale from his death stick. Punishingly enough, he was tragically single and even though he loved the idea of becoming a father, that was never going to

happen.

Derry, Maine

Alexandra's Mind

Alexandra seemed to be in a trance as she stared outside the window in her kitchen that was in front of the sink. She was scrubbing the last plate that needed to be washed, but as she looked outside, the brunette suddenly started to think about her past again.

It's been a week since the two Ray women and their loyal dog Duncan moved into Derry. Surprisingly, Agata was adjusting well enough and Duncan loved having a backyard to run around and play. Alexandra could hear them right now because the back door that led outside was open, and the gentle laughter that her daughter suddenly gave was enough to bring Alexandra back.

She blinked and sighed, turning off the hot water and placing the now clean plate on the drying rack with the rest of the dish she'd recently washed.

Alexandra was tired. It had been a busy week for her.

First, she had to find a job quickly, and she found it in Derry's Sunny Diner – the only diner in the town. She was able to arrange a job there as a waitress but as soon as she got her shift schedule, Alexandra knew it was going to be tough. She'd work from Mondays to Thursdays from noon to eight and then on Fridays and Saturdays she'd work from three to nine – she was glad to have a working car because the trip from her house to her job was ten minutes, and by foot, it would've been forty minutes.

Just imagining Agata alone in this house late into the night was enough for Alexandra to feel nauseous.

So her plan was to work with this schedule for a while and then when she's more familiar with her boss, try to change her schedule for her to be home when night comes.

Second, she had to enroll Agata in Derry Middle School.

Principal Haywood wasn't the same Principal she had when Alexandra was a student here, which relieved her because a sudden memory of Principal Field yelling at her in the halls, right in front of everyone, because she was caught skipping P.E flooded her memory lane.

But Principal Haywood was warmly welcoming of an old student and even toured the school for both of them on the same day. Alexandra had mixed feelings about walking in the halls again and seeing her old classrooms – in the bathroom on the second floor was where Patricia and Evvie – two very pretty and popular girls – had forced her to drink toilet water when she was twelve years old.

She had the urge to spit right on the floor after remembering it.

Principal Haywood had promised that her daughter was going to love being a student there. Alexandra hoped so too.

Agata seemed fine enough with her new school but Alexandra knew her daughter.

Agata was a quiet child, but very observant too. It was like the universe had balanced her daughter's personality. But sometimes Alexandra worried about her first day in that school. In New York, her classmates were used to her being the quiet kid and no one actually bothered her – but small-town kids were different, and from what Alexandra remembers from her childhood in this town, kids here could be mean.

The air smelled rotten when they headed out of that school, and when they reached her car, Alexandra and Agata saw a red balloon tied to the rear-mirror that said 'Welcome Back!'.

They were both weirded out by it, but they shrugged it off thinking it was a prank from local teenagers.

That happened yesterday, and Alexandra couldn't help but look over her shoulder ever since because she had a feeling someone was staring at her. She also began having insomnia and hear the floors downstairs creaking loudly at night. No one had been home and she always locked both doors and every window downstairs before going

to sleep – so Alexandra's logical mind thought on everything that was causing this, except for the supernatural part.

Besides, Duncan never showed signs of an intruder being in the house.

She didn't believe in ghosts. Only in old memories that seemed to be getting to her more nowadays every since she arrived in Derry.

August 1st, 1988

1:11 PM

Agata's POV

"Honey, you need to get out of the house and make friends," Alexandra gingerly said as an episode of 'The Golden Girls' ended.

The two were enjoying some television time just after lunch and Alexandra as been thinking about how much she wanted her daughter to have friends here. She doesn't want their life in New York to chase them to their new one and it would leave Alexandra devastated to see her daughter being labeled as the 'quiet kid' or the 'lonely kid' again.

Agata almost pouted as she petted Duncan on his soft, furry head. She dreaded this conversation. She liked staying indoors, reading her books and playing with Duncan in the backyard. Agata also liked helping her mom make this once alcohol smelling house turn homier but it was clear that her mom had other plans for today.

Her shift was going to start in less than two hours and Agata knew her mom didn't want her to stay home alone for too long. She wanted her to make friends and have the company of someone other than Duncan's.

"I know mommy," Agata quietly muttered as Duncan leaned into her hand for more petting.

Alexandra smiled knowingly at her daughter, "I know it sucks sweetie, but I want you to enjoy your last month of vacation before you start school," she paused to look at her wristwatch, "Wouldn't it

be nice to start school with already knowing some of the kids there?"

Agata thought how nice that sounded, but that was it. It was good to hear about her finally making friends but it's easier to imagine in than for her to physically approach someone and introduce herself.

Agata's introverted nature told her to stay home and finish her Alice's Adventures in Wonderland book, she's been dancing around finishing it since she arrived at this house, but she loved her mom more than anything in her life. And Agata liked making her hard-working mom happy since it made her life easier.

Can't afford to order pizza? No problem.

Not enough for ice cream? That's okay.

Only one Christmas gift every year? Agata gratefully took it.

Making her mom miserable because of their low financial lifestyle? It would kill Agata inside.

So, reluctantly, Agata stood up from the couch where she had previously been sitting on to watch television with her mom and gives her a tight smile, "Okay mommy, I'll try this time."

Alexandra gave her daughter a gentle, but sad smile. From her seat from the couch they were sharing, she reached her hand to grab Agata's and squeezed the smaller hand in a comforting way, "Agata, you don't have to force yourself to approach every kid you see out there. I just want you to be with kids your age while I'm at work, I worry about leaving you alone with Duncan all day."

Agata loved her mom very much. They were a small family, with Agata having no idea of the whereabouts of her father, and even though she has been curious about him, Agata realized how sensitive the subject was to her mom.

When she was eight years old, Agata asked her mom about her dad after a sad Father's Day where her class painted mugs to later gift them to their dads. Agata did one for her mom like she always did, but this time she made questions. The only thing her mother offered was that the last time she saw him was when she was living in

Boston.

Agata knew better than to ask too many questions about her mom's past, she knew it was messy. She knew that her mom, after running away from Derry, traveled around the country with strangers that became her friends. But even they were forgotten by her mom because Agata was never introduced to a friend of hers.

"We're fine by ourselves, mom," Agata calmly stated, "But" squeezing her mom's hand as well, Agata gave her a small smile, "I'll try, for you."

Alexandra grinned at her daughter and showed her a grateful look on her face as she spoke, "Thank you, honey."

Thirty minutes later

Abigail sauntered through Witcham Street on her way to the nearest park she could find. She had Duncan on a leash and he was having a great time, sniffing the area and loving the fresh air, but always walking slightly ahead of her in a protective manner.

She was wearing a navy-colored circle skirt and a mint peasant top with a square neckline and short puff sleeves. Agata chose to put on her white hush puppies slip-on loafers with matching scrunch socks. Since the weather was hot and sunny today, she decided to put her hair up in a ponytail with a pink scrunchie tying around it.

And no matter what she wore, her silver necklace and her bead bracelet were two jewelry that Agata always had with her. They were very important because her mom worked hard to gift them on her tenth and eleventh birthday and Agata took very well care of them.

Agata was walking and looking around at the same time, taking in the neighborhood around her. It was definitely different from New York. She used to live in an area with apartment buildings covering the streets, so getting used to seeing suburban houses everywhere was an experience. Her mom did say that there were apartment buildings in Derry but they were on the other side of the town, maybe if Agata sees them she'll feel like home again.

Agata was scared of living here. She had the safety of knowing where everything was back in the city. Here, she only knew where the library was, and it was a good ten-minute walk to get there. Maybe after taking Duncan to the park she could go there and make her library card to finally start taking new books home.

Her thoughts, however, were interrupted when suddenly a boy crossed the opposite street, running towards her with an excited look on his face.

"A police dog!" he happily greeted them.

Agata paused her steps to take a look at the boy. He couldn't be older than six, his doe eyes gleamed with curiosity and wonder as he stared at Duncan, who sat on the pavement when Agata stopped walking.

She felt a little awkward, but since it was a younger kid Agata wasn't as anxious as she could've been, "He's not a police dog," she told him lightly, "His name is Duncan, and he's my best friend," she inwardly cringed at her choice of words, feeling relieved that this was a child and not someone her age.

As birds chirped in the tree above them and when the little boy was about to talk again, Agata heard another voice from where he had come from.

"G-G-Georgie!"

A boy with a worried expression ran across the road to get to them. He had cropped auburn hair and his blue eyes looked anxiously between the little boy, apparently named Georgie, and Duncan.

Agata understood, even though Duncan was still growing up he was a fairly large dog and Duncan could come off as intimidating for those who didn't know how sweet he actually was. So she sympathized with the boy's concern.

"Hi, Billy! Look at how big this dog is! She told me his name is Duncan!" Georgie enthusiastically told him before turning to Agata, "Can I pet Duncan?" he asked expectantly.

Agata couldn't say no to that face, she smiled and nodded at him, and

with her consent, Georgie began patting Duncan enthusiastically, and the German Shepard appreciated the attention as he wagged his tail at the attention from the smaller boy.

The older boy stared at Agata and she saw his eyes widen a little bit, "H-He doesn't b-bite, right?"

Agata shyly decided to watch Georgie and Duncan as she replied, "No, he only attacks bad people."

"Just like a police dog!" Georgie happily piped before giggling when Duncan licked the palm of his hand.

That made the blue-eyed boy smile a little, "C-Cool," without hesitation this time, he reaches his hand towards Duncan's head and pats his fur as well, "Good b-boy, Duncan."

Agata noticed his stuttering, but she was raised to never make questions about other people's differences that didn't seem regular. So she decided to ignore it and gulped down her little anxious voice telling her to go away before she spoke again, interrupting Duncan's petting session, "I'm Agata, I moved here a week ago."

Georgie is the first to look at her, "I'm George, but you can call me Georgie! This is my big brother Bill, but I call him Billy!"

Agata couldn't help but smile at the boy's jubilant attitude. She also sensed pride in his voice when he introduced his brother. There was no doubt that they were close.

"G-Georgie! I can speak f-for myself," Bill scolded him lightly, giving Agata a sheepish look, "Y-You're the n-n-new kid then, nice to m-meet you," he declared with a friendly smile, "A-Are you really f-f-from New York C-City?"

Agata's shy expression changed into a surprised one, "How did you know?"

Georgie giggled, "News travels fast in Derry!" he inputted as he shared a look with Bill.

She frowned, looking at the pavement as suddenly she began feeling

anxious, "I see..."

After an awkward pause between the trio, Duncan's sudden bark startled the three of them. Approaching from the road, and riding his bicycle, a boy could be seen suddenly hitting the breaks, creating an obnoxious sound, by the curb and widening his eyes towards the dog.

"What the fuck is that?!" he exclaimed, not taking his dark eyes hidden behind thick black glasses from Duncan, who had calmed down when Agata gently hushed him.

Agata cringed at the choice of words the boy decided to throw at them, she wasn't used to hearing curses, especially through the mouth of someone her age.

"Beep beep R-Richie! Watch y-your tone! Ge-Georgie is right here!" Bill snapped at once as his little brother grinned widely.

Leaving his bicycle by simply unceremoniously dumping it on the pavement, this Richie boy approached the trio with an awed expression towards Duncan, and the dog was staring back curiously.

"Dude, what a beast!" he finally looked up at the dog's owner and grinned, "Is he yours? Who are you? Who is she?!" he seemed thrilled with the prospect of finding a random intimidating but his overbearing entrance had thrown Agata off, was he talking to her or Bill?

Bill rolled his eyes with a knowing look on his face, managing to send Agata an apologetic smile before speaking on Richie's behalf.

"Hi, Richie! This is Duncan and her name is Agata!" Georgie answered brightly.

In response, the spectacled boy ruffled the younger boy's hair in a brotherly manner as he now looked at Agata. Richie's smile seemed to have dropped a little bit when he noticed her appearance, and Agata didn't know how to act as she got stared by him.

"Uhm, nice to meet you?" avoiding looking at him, her bluebell eyes averted towards Duncan, who seemed to want more of Georgie's attention as he beckoned the little boy's hand by placing his muzzle

underneath his hand.

"Oh! You're New York!" Richie suddenly exclaimed as realization crossed his face.

She nodded, still staring at the adorable scene of Georgie complying with Duncan's request and giving him more pats on his head. Duncan's wagging tail was hitting her shin nonstop, but she didn't mind it because to her it was a form of comfort.

Agata only wanted to reach a park for Duncan to play in and then go to the library but it seemed that nothing goes according to plan when you live in a small town. In New York City, you walked in the streets and minded your own business, the city that never sleeps is always moving forward with people that sometimes had to time to stop and chinwag.

"S-She's not New York, she's f-f-from New York," She heard Bill say apprehensively.

"I know that! So, city girl! What's it like to move from a big ass city to a shitty old town?"

Agata cringed, becoming a little overwhelmed, "Uhm I don't know. It's quiet here," she paused and mustered some strength to look up again to look at Bill and Richie, they both were giving her intently expressions and Agata almost looked down again, "I'm used to hearing sirens at night and traffic sounds."

Richie seemed impressed, "Wow, oh wait – I haven't properly introduced myself!" he grinned, extending his arm towards her, "Richie Tozier's the name, and doing voices is my game!"

Agata smiled at that and used her leash-free hand to hold Richie's, but before she could shake it he pulled her hand towards his face and promptly pecked her knuckles with his chapped lips, startling the brunette and making Georgie giggle.

"Pleased to meet such a beautiful city dame as yourself, Ms. Agata," he continues with an English accent as she pulled her arm back to the side of her body with cheeks reddening by the second.

"R-Richie! Don't d-do that, you've m-m-made her u-uncomfortable!" Bill scolded him lightly, used to his friend's antics but feeling sympathetic for Agata, who wasn't, "S-Sorry, he's like this to e-everyone."

With a feigned gasp and an exaggerated hurt expression, Richie placed his hand on Bill's shoulder, "Big Bill! I can't believe you're tainting this girl's mind with lies about me already!" he waggled his eyebrows at him, "No need to be jealous, you know I love you more," he laughed when Bill swatted his arm away with an exasperated expression.

"Beep beep R-Richie," Bill lightly grumbled.

Agata stared at their interaction in awe, it was obvious they were close friends. When Agata watched the other kids play during recess time she would always be curious about their friendships. She noticed that groups were formed amongst her classmates but they all seemed to get along outside of their circle as well – being social must be such an amazing thing. Being able to never exhaust yourself both mentally and socially when you're speaking to a lot of people every day or when you're able to have more than four close friends in your life was considered a super-power in Agata's mind.

So, when it came to being social, Agata was powerless.

She took comfort in her books and avid imagination that came with reading so many fantasy books. Her favorite genre was adventure and books filled with kids that go on quests to save the world or simply to just have fun. She loved 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy and even though her current fixation was Alice in Wonderland, she'd return to them and gulp down the story like it was the first time reading it.

Books about friendship were, ironically, what she wanted to read most.

Which perhaps was a sign from her mind begging for her to make friends. And Agata would always think 'easier said than done' to that.

"Agata? Where do you live?" Georgie suddenly asked, interrupting her deep thinking and his brother's bickering with Richie that had

blended in the background.

Agata stared at him and smiled, feeling more relaxed around the boy, "I live in West Broadway street, house number seven."

Georgie's smile dropped as he stopped petting Duncan, Richie's eyes comically widened and Bill was left completely speechless as he gave Agata a startled look.

"Holy *shit*! That's Devil Moore's house!" Richie exclaimed at once, using his arm to shake Bill's shoulder with complete euphoria, "That's Devil Moore's *fucking* house, Bill!"

"I know R-R-Richie! S-Stop shaking m-me!" the blue-eyed boy yelled, swatting his arm away again.

Georgie looked up at Agata with a frown, "Oh no..."

"I thought he died?! Holy shit! How can you even sleep there?!" Richie continued, staring at Agata with newfound respect.

Bill remained silent as he expectantly waited for Agata to answer.

The brunette was still a little astonished by their reaction but then she remembered her mom telling her about the reputation he had in this town. She couldn't imagine anyone related to her mom being mean-spirited but judging by the reactions Georgie, Bill and Richie had when she told them where she lived, Agata believed in the accusations now more than ever, "He was my great-grandfather and when he died he left the house to my mom," she promptly explained.

"D-Devil Moore had f-family?" Bill wondered out loud as he scowled confusedly.

"Dude! You're related to that evil assbat? I feel bad for you," Richie shook his head and placed his hands on his hips.

"He's dead. Only my mom and I," Duncan cut her with a small whine, making her smile, "and Duncan, live there now."

"Is," Georgie stopped talking mid-sentence as if he hesitant, "Is your house haunted?"

Richie and Bill looked from Georgie to Agata, waiting for her answer, and this was when she decided to sigh.

"Of course not, there's no such thing as ghosts," Agata told the boy with a strained smile. All of this attention on her was starting to overwhelm her because she was not used to getting attention from kids her age. She almost didn't know what to say anymore.

"Are you sure about that? My dad told me there's the ghost of a janitor that died at his workplace and—" Richie stopped talking when he felt Bill's glare on him, then he looked at the frightened expression on Georgie and the skeptical look on Agata, "Okay tough crowd. I get it, beep beep," he grumbled.

"What does that mean?" Agata asked, finally giving in to her curiosity.

"It's m-meant to t-tell Richie to s-slow down when he t-talks too m-much," Bill explained through his stuttering. Surprisingly, Agata was getting used to it.

"It's from Roadrunner!" Georgie piped in, obviously a fan of the cartoon.

Agata liked Looney Tunes as well.

After changing the subject from her great-grandfather to discussing what cartoon was the best, Richie finally gave Duncan some petting and Bill managed to scratch behind his ears. Duncan was definitely getting more attention than usual because the only people who did that were his girls. So his tail wagged the whole time as Agata continued talking with Richie, Bill, and cute little Georgie.

And even though they didn't know, their little chat by the sidewalk was the beginning of a friendship that would last forever. A friendship that was so strong that would kill an evil entity in twenty-eight years.

3. Like Peas and Chocolate Cupcakes

A/N: I'm conflicted with who Agata should end up with. So I created a poll on my profile so you can help me decide instead! It will be open until I get to the plot so hurry and vote before I close it! It would really help me!

August 25th, 1988 – Tuesday

It's been almost four weeks since Agata has befriended a group of very interesting and intriguing boys.

After meeting Bill and Richie (and the adorable Georgie), the boys decided to introduce her to the rest of their friends the next day, and Agata had been so nervous to meet them, but Bill was quick to assure her that his friends would be nice to her. She had a feeling that Bill was kinda the leader of the group, and she was very curious about his leadership skills.

When she first met Eddie Kaspbrak, he complimented the red ribbon on her ponytail and asked her if she had any grave diseases. Agata, able to quickly recover from the unusual question, simply told the boy that the only time she got seriously sick was two years ago when death almost took her in the form of pneumonia. Agata thought that Eddie was a little obsessed with health, and he wouldn't stop talking about how dirty New York City's subway tunnels must be. Eddie also wasn't a big fan of Duncan in the beginning, claiming that dogs always catch fleas and ticks – but he warmed up to him when Eddie threw a stick and Duncan brought it back.

Stan Uris liked Duncan right away, and the German Shepard instantly started licking his palms as soon as Agata approached them with Bill by her side. Stan seemed more level-headed and she noticed his eye-rolling habit whenever Richie would make a dirty joke or banter with Eddie.

Bickering or not, after spending the afternoon with the boys and knowing them better, Agata understood how close the four were.

For the past four weeks, Agata was able to harmonize herself with the group, and even though it was difficult to adapt herself to having a social group that genuinely wanted her to be involved with them – Agata was glad to have met them. She was slowly coming out of her shell and seeing her mom happy to see her hanging out with her friends incentivized Agata to pull herself introverted soul out of the security of being alone with Duncan and her books.

And then she had the pleasure of meeting the Bowers gang two weeks ago.

If Agata was anxious about being social, then she was completely mortified by the way the older teen boys acted towards her new friends. She had been confused why Richie had shielded her body behind him when the Bowers nasty boys had approached them on their way to the Barrens.

Henry Bowers, the obvious leader of the delinquents, terrorized the twelve-year-old when he noticed her. Agata disliked everything from his foul mouth, erratic eyes and ugly mullet. He called her all the names women hate being called and ultimately marked her to be bullied.

If it wasn't for Duncan's empowering barking, warning Henry and his friends to back off when they took a step towards the group of younger teens, Agata might've tasted the dreadful 'Welcome to Derry' ritual Henry did.

If it wasn't for the boys standing in front of her, she would've started crying right there.

The worst part is that she did end up crying when the gang left, the boys were a bit awkward about seeing a girl crying around them but eventually they comforted her and Richie managed to make her laugh seconds later.

But meeting Bowers' gang had shaken her so much that she didn't leave her bedroom for three days, and when the boys eventually managed to bring her out of the house, Agata looked over her shoulder all the time.

That happened two weeks ago, though.

And Agata was calmer about the whole situation now.

The five teens were down in the Barrens, building a dam and splashing each other at the same time. Duncan was having the time of his life, never he had this much attention from a group of kids – so he was now having a well-deserved rest under the shade of a tree while he protectively watched his owner and her friends.

"Rich—! Do not fucking throw water in my face! We talked about this, it can get inside my mouth! There are larva eggs in this water and if I swallow it I'll be a fucking walking house for them!" Eddie snapped at the spectacled boy once Richie had splashed water towards his face.

"Your mom said the same thing last night when I came in her mouth," Richie quipped at the shorter boy while wagging his eyebrows with a wicked grin.

He dodged the sudden splash of water Eddie threw his way and just like that the two began fighting each other using the river as their weapons. And while Richie found the whole moment hilarious – Eddie had a murderous look in his dark eyes.

Agata gave them a knowing look and shook her head as she placed another stone on top of their dam, it was getting higher and higher and even though it was such a small thing to do, she was having fun thanks to the company she had.

"Are they always arguing like this?" the brunette asked Stan, who was kneeling next to her and focusing on keeping his rock balanced enough to create a wall.

The curly-haired boy rolled his eyes, "You've been with us for like a month now, so you should know," he then smiled good-naturedly at the girl when she started chuckling.

"You're right Stan, I guess I just need to get even more used to it," Agata told him with an amused smile.

"If y-you keep hanging o-out with us, you w-will," Bill remarked, giving her a friendly grin.

"Of course she'll keep hanging out with us! Won't you, Aggie?" Richie piped in as he abruptly jumped right in front of them, making Agata squeak when he splashed all of the three of them simultaneously.

Stan and Bill quickly stood up and began shouting at him while Agata ran out of the river, looking at her wet dress with a frown.

"Richie!" she squealed after the boys were done yelling at him, "This dress is new!"

Eddie came up from behind him and splashed him right in the face, "You're getting her new dress dirty you asshole!" he barked in Agata's defense.

Richie managed to laugh before coughing out some of the water that got into his mouth, "Sorry!" he spluttered out, giving Agata a genuine but quick apologetic grin, "I'll buy you ice cream!"

Agata seemed pleased with his promise of the free treat so she instantly stopped being upset about being soaked. While the boys began a now full splash war, Agata decided to take a seat next to Duncan and watch them with a smile stuck on her lips.

Duncan whined as a form of greeting when his girl started patting his head after sitting on a rock near the tree, Agata didn't like sitting on the grass but she was starting to get used to being surrounded by nature almost every day. Her new friends liked hanging out in this area and Agata couldn't complain. Hanging out with them was preferable than staying home alone with Duncan all day.

Watching her mom work all day and only coming home at dinner time was something that Agata was accustomed to, but before, she had the racket of her loud neighbors and New York City's noises that brought Agata a peculiar solace, and she'd rather have all that back than living in a two-story house in a quiet neighborhood.

So yes, she couldn't complain. Wherever they wanted to go, Agata would follow.

The boys eventually stopped splashing each other and decided to join Agata for a snack break. Usually, before leaving their homes after

lunch, the group would pack some snacks (and Eddie never forgot to put his second fanny pack and mini first aid kit inside of his), and Agata's mom showed her love for her daughter and appreciation for her new friends by packing her some of the desserts leftovers from the diner – it seems that her mom was getting along with her co-workers.

"Hey asshole, she was giving me the chocolate cupcake to me!" Eddie exclaimed as Richie took a bite out of it after grabbing it from Agata's hand.

"Language..." Agata mumbled as she rummaged through her backpack to fetch her peanut butter sandwich. She rarely scolded the boys about their swearing, but sometimes she couldn't help it.

"What? No way dude, I grabbed it first," Richie retorted, talking with his mouth full purposely near Eddie.

"It doesn't matter, you know my mom doesn't let me eat stuff like this and Agata said–"

Agata, not wanting another spat to happen while they were eating, quickly silenced Eddie's rambling by taking out another wrapped chocolate cupcake from her backpack. This one was going to be for her but she already had her sandwich so she didn't mind giving it to Eddie.

"O-Oh..." Eddie seemed embarrassed when he grabbed it, "Thanks, Agata," he smiled shyly at her before unwrapped the napkin around it and taking a bite while glaring at a smug-looking Richie, whose mouth was covered with chocolate.

Bill was secretly hoping that Agata had another sweet treat enough for him but after seeing Agata grab her peanut butter sandwich and take a bite out of it, he hid his disappointed expression and started eating his bag of chips while Stan started to pat Duncan while eating his apple.

Seeing all that food made the dog whine for some attention, and Agata quickly took out his traveling bowl from her bag and some canine dry food. Truly, what impressed the boys about Agata was

how thoughtful she was of them and Duncan. She was too gentle to hang out with them but the four took upon their own hands to protect her from the Bowers Gang.

Bill knew that bringing a girl into the group was a risky concept, but with Richie's help he was able to convince Eddie and Stan to accept her – Richie even teased Eddie for complimenting her red ribbon after Agata left.

Since Agata didn't have a bicycle, she'd ride on the back of whoever offered first, which usually ended in a brawl between who would get to let a pretty girl sit on their bicycles. The reason why they'd fight over it before Agata arrived was that having her arms wrapped around their torsos made them feel tingly in a good way, and even though they didn't dwell much on the strange notion – they liked it.

But they could never argue in front of her.

Stan noticed that Agata always side-saddled while sitting down and he liked how ladylike the brunette could be sometimes, it was a change of fresh air from seeing Richie chase Eddie with a muddy stick.

"We should g-get a cargo to a-attach to one of our bikes to c-carry Duncan," Bill suddenly said, bringing the attention of his friends.

Duncan always had to chase after the bicycle that had his owner. He was too big to carry and it was a little dangerous to leave him just to chase after them through the busy streets. Agata worried so much that he'd get hit by a car or get lost.

"Dude, do you know how expensive that shit is? Just give me a box, duct tape, and a big chain and I'll make one," Richie promptly said.

Stan, who already had an exasperated expression before Richie could even finish talking, retorted at him, "Or you'll end up killing Duncan when your stupid handmade shitty cargo breaks instantly."

Agata, who couldn't imagine losing her dog, giggled. Stan could be so ironic and deadpanning sometimes, but as soon as she was able to recognize when he was being serious or not, it became funny.

Duncan however, wasn't as amused as his owner when he gave them a warning growl.

Instantly, Richie's eyes widened as he stared at the canine, "Whoa, I was just kidding! Don't go Cujo on me, boy!" as a peace offering, he threw the rest of what was left of his ham sandwich at the German Shepard, and a dog's stomach is never full as he quickly feasted on it.

Eddie laughed, "You should've seen your face, Rich!" he jeered as Bill and Agata shared a knowing look.

Richie squinted his eyes at him and flipped him off, making Eddie grin even more.

After they ate, and their clothes were dry, Agata made sure they didn't leave any trash behind before joining the group when they started heading out of the Barrens. With Duncan loyally walking by her side, the teens thought that ice cream was a good idea for the scorching weather.

Even though Agata was full, she still wanted that cold treat that Richie promised to get her.

September 16th, 1988 – Friday

Agata was glad she survived her first week at a new school.

She had her boys to thank for that.

Classes were done for today but she was waiting with Richie, Eddie, and Bill for Stan near his locker. It sucked that they weren't all in the same classes but at least she was never by herself.

Agata felt a little on edge every time she walked in the corridors without anyone by her side, the only thing she disliked about this school was the Bowers Gang lurking around. She already had Patrick Hockstetter in two of her classes and he purposely sat behind her. Agata tried to ignore the eerie feeling of his stare burning on the back of her head and the quiet taunts to not alert the teachers.

Agata was more scared of Patrick than Henry. And for good reasons.

She hasn't told anyone this but Patrick followed her into the toilets and Agata thought she was going to stay inside a cubicle that smelled like someone just had smoked in it for the whole fifteen-minute break, hearing him whistle a creepy tune right outside the door.

But, ironically enough, Greta Bowie unknowingly rescued her by yelling at him to 'fuck off' before entering the girls' toilet room. When inside she started going off about a girl named Beverly Marsh – and she even startled Agata when she kicked the cubicle's door she was currently hiding.

Luckily for her, when she left, Greta calmed down a bit after seeing that it was only Agata, and not the girl she a foully blabbering about to her two friends. Greta keenly told her that Patrick was gone, clearing the way for Agata to leave the room and find her friends as fast as possible.

Greta lived in the house in front of hers. But the two never actually met before the semester started. Agata didn't want to sound judgemental, especially when she heard Greta talk about this Beverly girl in an offensive manner, but she seemed like a typical mean girl. So Agata decided to stay away from her but also on a neutral side – because Greta was a bit scary and being bullied by her was something that Agata didn't want to add to her cart.

That all happened on her second day of school, but it already feels weeks have passed. Bill, Richie, Stan, and Eddie made her forget about the bad things because when they were all together she felt all of her anxiety drain from her body – they were her first real friends and she could've never asked for anything else.

But Agata didn't know that soon she would meet three more kids that would make the group even more complete.

And one of them was a pretty girl named Beverly Marsh, who just passed by her in the corridor.

PS: I am so confused about why the Bowers Gang is in middle school. I genuinely tried to search for answers because I know they are around 15-16 years old so seeing them in middle school

throws me out. I'm ignoring this plot hole because it's not mine to fix, but if you know the answer please tell me!

PPS: Don't forget to vote on my poll! Canon starts in the next chapter so hurry!

4. Eight Months Later

It was explained to me (and when I re-watched the movie it was confirmed as well) that the Bowers Gang appear in the same school as the Losers because Derry only had two schools: Elementary and High Schools. I guess a small town couldn't afford to have two schools.

Also, it seems that Richie won by four votes (one counted on AO3)! So this is officially a RichiexOC story. But don't worry, I would never ignore his feelings for Eddie so Richie is bisexual in my story, okay?

Trigger warning: Homophobic slurs.

October 14th, 1988 – Friday

Agata liked the rain, even though she preferred sunny weather.

She enjoyed watching it pour down heavily from the sky. Usually, she would pull a stool towards the only window inside the living room area from her New York apartment and sit there for hours, watching the city become drenched under the dark clouds pelting raindrops from above.

She also appreciated the feeling of being under it, either she was below her ladybug umbrella or not. Her mom would always scold her if she came home from school soaked from rainwater – but Agata hasn't been sick in two years, so she wasn't concerned about catching a cold.

Bill, however, wasn't as lucky. He had a severe cold.

He has been absent from school for an entire week now, and Agata was concerned for her friend.

As she walked home from school, under her ladybug umbrella that her mom was quick to remind to place it inside her backpack, Agata considered visiting the Denbrough home to check on her stuttering

friend – and to also see little Georgie. She hasn't seen him since the Denbroughs invited her mom and her for dinner two weeks ago.

Agata knew her mom didn't have friends her age. So seeing her interact with Zach and Sharon Denbrough, Bill and Georgie's amicable parents, so well made her heart swell with hope. Agata knew what it was like to be alone, but now that she had four close friends in her life she dearly hoped that her mom could find at least someone her age to talk to.

And it was going well. Agata was now getting used to the telephone ringing after her mom came home from work, and hearing her laugh during her long conversations with Sharon always led Agata to think that maybe moving to Derry was a good idea.

Decisively, as she walked around the corner to Witcham Street, she crossed the road to the other side, wanting to stop by Bill's house to visit him.

Usually, she didn't walk home alone. Since Eddie and Bill lived near her they would give her a ride on the back of their rides and leave her near her house – but Bill was sick and Eddie's mom had picked him up from school because she didn't want him to get sick from the rain.

Stan's father picked him up as well but at least she had Richie to give her company until they reached his house, which was ten minutes away from hers. He hadn't been too keen on letting her walk home alone if she had Duncan with her the spectacled boy would've been more relieved – but Agata promised she'd be fine because everyone at school knew the Bowers Gang would usually hang out by Henry's place on Fridays.

Still, Agata had to convince Richie not to walk her home. She only had to promise to call his house as soon as she got home.

The rain flow seemed to be getting lighter as a few rays of sun peeked through the grey clouds when Agata arrived in front of the Denbrough's residence, but the mellow sky didn't match her expression when she saw a police cruiser parked on the curb in front of Bill's house. Agata felt an anxious pull on her stomach as she

fastened her steps towards it, not caring if she wasn't correctly holding her umbrella.

As she stepped on the grass that Sharon liked to keep cut, she saw the front door being open from inside the house. Halting her steps, Agata recognized Oscar Bowers as he stepped outside the front porch. She noticed how tense he looked, but Agata has never seen the man smile or relaxed.

He noticed her as well, and as he stared another police officer that Agata didn't know walked out as well, standing with his back towards the streets as he seemed to be speaking with someone inside.

Sharon Denbrough was inconsolable, her sobbings could be heard from where Agata was standing and hearing the disheartening sounds coming from the usual cordial woman snapped Agata out of her weird staring contest with Henry's father. She had to remind herself that he wasn't like that psycho.

"Mrs. Denbrough?!" Agata yelled out through the raining as she marched towards the porch stairs, "Mrs. Denbrough, is everything okay?" she placed her hand on the porch rail as she walked upwards.

All heads turned towards the new voice, and Agata tried to ignore the nauseating bad feeling inside her chest.

"Agata!" Sharon bellowed at her, sounding terrified but hopeful at the same time. The two cops watched with apprehensive expressions as the pianist moved straight towards the girl, meeting her halfway, "Please tell me you saw Georgie nearby! Please, tell me you saw him!" she implored, grabbing the brunette by the shoulders to stare at her with sorrowful, teary eyes.

Agata was speechless first, but then, as she slowly realized why Bill's mom was asking her about Georgie in such a desperate manner, an alarmed expression crossed her face as her eyes widened at the older woman, "N-No I haven't seen him, what's going on?"

Sharon didn't answer, but her tormented expression told Agata what she needed to know.

Wordlessly, Agata gently pried Sharon's hands off her shoulders and passed by her, walking inside the Denbrough's with a frightened look on her face. If this was a regular day, the polite teen would request permission to enter the house, but nothing about this situation seemed normal.

Agata noticed that Bill's dad wasn't home, he was probably working, but she wasn't looking for him – she walked up the stairs straight towards Bill's room, avoiding looking into Georgie's, and she found her friend, sitting on his bed with a haunted expression.

His blue eyes were staring at the wooden floor of his bedroom, unblinkingly. Agata didn't know what to say as she stood on the doorway. He looked so lost and on the verge to cry – and Agata has never seen him like this.

"Bill?"

"He's gone."

His tone was final, and the brunette never heard him speak like that. His voice sounded hollow and stoic and Bill always carried emotion or lightness when he spoke and stuttered.

"He's gone. And it's all my fa-fault."

Agata remained quiet as she finally stepped inside the room, taking a seat next to him on his bed after placing her backpack in front of his nightstand.

She tried not to cry at what her friend was implying, but her lower-lip was already trembling as her blue eyes became watery, "Bill no way," she whispered fearfully.

"T-They found hi-his blood in the street g-gutter! W-Where that stupid bo-boat fell i-into!" Bill finally exploded, startling Agata as he turned to look at her with a dismayed look, "I let hi-him go a-alone! And now my-my little brother i-is missing!" his sudden explosion subdued when Bill realized Agata began crying.

And he followed soon after, finally letting go and letting his crawling guilt get to him.

And sick or not, Agata quickly hugged Bill as both sobbed together. She might've vomited right there at the overwhelming distress that took over her body but as Bill held her, she found herself keeping the bile down. For him. To comfort him. The boy who introduced her to friends that would mark her life forever.

Little Georgie was gone.

And Agata stopped liking rainy days ever since.

June 1989 – Last Day of School

When Agata turned thirteen years old back in February, she didn't feel like celebrating her birthday. But her friends still managed to buy her gifts and she still had a cake to share with the four of them. They spent the day watching movies and just try to maintain the mood as light as possible.

She loved the gifts that she received. Richie's anecdotes book, Eddie's red wallet with ladybugs sewed on it, Stan's dog plushie and Bill's portrait of her that he worked on for weeks as a distraction from Georgie. Her mom had gotten her a journal, but she only gave it to her when the boys left the small gathering. Her mom explained that after what happened, she thought it would be a healthy way for Agata to express her emotions.

She could write everything she wanted, and her mom promised that she would never read it.

But Agata had still yet to write on its pages.

Georgie was still missing, and it's been eight months since his mysterious disappearance.

And it's like his vanishing began a chain of chaos as other kids started to go missing as well.

Betty Ripson's missing posters were all over Derry a day after Christmas, and Agata was saddened because the two were starting to get along before Christmas vacation and Betty seemed friendly and nice. Then, tragically, three-year-old Matthew Clements was found

dead on a constructed roadway in late April. The toddler's death enthused a strict curfew for children and adolescents around the town but to no avail, children were still going missing and the police of Derry had no leads.

But today, the students in Derry High School seemed not to care about the missing girl as they all celebrated their last day before the summer break.

Agata sighed as she placed her notebook and pencil case inside her backpack as the last bell ring for today echoed through the halls. She has Social Studies only with Stan while the others had Math together, but she wasn't complaining since the teacher let them do whatever they wanted.

Per usual, Stan waited for her to hurry by her desk with a patient smile – while he was quick to put his things away and Agata was always impressed at how eager her friend was to leave school.

"You're coming to my Bar Mitzvah, right?" he suddenly asked as he watched her rise from her seat.

"Of course!" Agata reassured him brightly as she placed her backpack around her body, "I promised, and besides, I've never been to one so I'm very curious to see what happens."

Stan smiled amusedly as he gave his curious friend a side glance, but then his expression shifted into a sour one, "I just hope I'll be ready by then."

"You will, you just need to be more confident," Agata easily stated, determined that Stan would succeed. They walked out of the classroom and Agata spotted her friends walking ahead of them.

"More confident" Stan mumbled to himself as he followed after Agata.

"Hi boys!" she greeted them mirthfully as she placed herself between Bill and Richie.

"Wait for us, guys!" Stan said as he squeezed himself between Eddie and Bill.

The group of five made their way down the corridor as they all spoke to each other, Richie grinning widely when Agata joined them, they shared a smile before looking at Bill when he spoke.

"Hey, Stan, what happens at a Bar Mitzvah, anyways? Ed says they slice the tip of your di-di-di-dick off," Bill wondered as Agata made a face of pure horror.

"They do what?!" she squealed, cheeks reddening as the group walked around a corner of the halls.

They all laughed at her expression whilst Stan rolled his eyes at Bill's inquire.

"Yeah, and I think the rabbi's gonna pull down your pants, turn to the crowd and say, 'Where's the beef?!'" Richie quipped following Bill's statement, making everyone amused except for Stan.

The curly-haired boy decided to quickly explain to his friends what truly happens, "At the Bar Mitzvah, I read from the Torah and then I make a speech and suddenly, I become a man," he explained as the group strode through the busy corridors.

"I could think of funner ways to become a man," Richie told them.

"Richie, you mean 'more fun'," Agata corrected her friend with a smile.

"Oh, shit," the trashmouth suddenly says and Agata's smile drops when she realizes why her friend's expression soured.

They were passing by the Bowers Gang, they were leaning against the wall right by the entrance of the school's staircase so there was no way of avoiding them. Agata simply reached for Richie's hand for comfort and stared at the dirty public school floor as they quickly passed by – Richie squeezed her hand in return.

She could feel Henry's glare on the back of her head, and she loathed how he made her feel just with a simple stare that she couldn't even see.

"Think they'll sign my yearbook?" Richie asked rhetorically with a dry

tone, "Dear Richie, sorry for taking a hot steamy dump in your backpack. Have a good summer!".

Agata sighed, letting go of his hand as they approached the stairs. She gave him a thankful smile and he nodded, this action hidden from the rest of the group as they began descending the stairs.

That uncomfortable moment with the gang was forgotten by when she noticed Greta coming up the stairs towards them with an enraged expression. She watched as Greta bumped against Stan, prompting the boy almost to lose his balance as he passed between him and Bill.

"Wow! Are you all right?" Agata quickly asked him with a concerned tone.

Stan looked at her with an annoyed expression targeted towards Greta, but nonetheless, he managed to smile at Agata and nod.

Agata really disliked Greta now, she was a bully. Once when she excused herself to use the toilet, Agata witnessed Greta and her two friends talk trash about Beverly Marsh – again. From what Agata reckoned, she was jealous of this Marsh girl. She has seen her during lunchtime, sitting alone at a table with a lonely expression. And Agata almost wanted to join her if it wasn't for the fact that she was scared that Greta would start targetting her as well.

She already had to deal with Bowers and his lunatic friends.

But one day she hoped to be brave enough to approach Beverly because Agata knew what it was like to be alone.

Agata looked slightly distraught when the boys decided to dump the contents inside their backpacks inside a trash can next to the bicycle parking.

"I just don't understand why you guys have to throw good supplies away" she complained lightly, pouting as they all gave her wide, amused grins.

"Because it's funny!" Richie told her.

"And feels good," Eddie added, nodding.

"Best. Feeling. Ever!" Stan agreed with a grin.

"Yeah? Try tickling your pickle for the first time," Richie jested, smirking at him.

"Richie!" Agata squeaked, her cheeks reddening as usual at his dirty jokes. It wasn't like she wanted them to stop being themselves around her after all her mom warned about the negative and positive perks of having only boys for friends, but she couldn't help to feel embarrassed at the prospect of hearing sexual jokes and remarks from kids her age.

"Oops, sorry my sweet, innocent Aggie," he teased her, but Agata knew he wasn't sorry at all.

"Hey, what do you guys wanna do tomorrow?" Eddie questioned while putting his backpack on.

"I start my training," Richie stated as he adjusted his thick glasses.

"Wait, what training?" The shorter boy asked him as Agata gave Richie a puzzled look.

"Street Fighter."

Richie was really good at arcade games, during the last week of summer Agata started to go to Derry's Arcade and she watched him play for hours, and she'd always be amazed by his skills. He tried to teach her how to play Pacman but the game ended up becoming too stressful for her. She preferred puzzles. Watching Richie play was more fun than actually playing anyways. He would invent voices for the characters and when he was out of tokens, they'd have ice cream and eat it in Bassey Park, under the shade of a tree.

"Is that how you wanna spend your summer? Inside of an arcade?" Eddie deadpanned, giving him a dumbfounded smile.

Richie sighed, pretending to be affected by his jab, "Beats spending it inside of your mother," he retorted before quickly turning to Stan, raising his arm to high five him, "Oh!"

But Stan, exasperated, grabbed hold of it and pushed it downwards while Agata tried not to smile looking at a peeved looking Eddie biting on his finger while glaring at Richie.

"What if we go to the quarry?" Stan suggested as Richie laughed at his quip alone.

"Guys, we have the B-B-Ba-Barrens," Bill told the group with a serious expression.

Agata shifted her eyes towards her shoes but nodded nonetheless. Bill still looked for Georgie, even after the funeral with the bodiless grave he still hasn't given up on the idea that his little brother has been taken by the sewer's stream to the Barrens.

"Right," Stan said as Richie nodded, choosing the Barrens as well. It was obvious Georgie was a sensitive subject between the group, especially if Bill was present. But none of them dared to go against Bill whenever he suggested going to the Barrens. They were good friends.

Eddie was looking into the distance when he noticed someone that made him gloomy, "Betty Ripson's mom," he stated, making his friends look at the drop off area where a cruiser was parked by the curb with two officers in front of it, but with Janice Ripson ahead of them, looking out towards the school's entrance with an expectant expression.

Agata noticed the dark circles under her eyes and she frowned sadly at how exhausted and disheveled the mother looked. It was depressing.

"Is she really expecting to see her come out of that school?" Stan wondered out loud with a pitiful tone.

"I don't know. As if Betty Ripson's been hiding in Home Ec. for the last few weeks," Eddie realistically told him.

Agata looked at him with a somber expression, "She's hasn't, trust me."

"You think they'll actually find her?" Stan questioned the group.

"Sure," Richie began, and Agata hoped he wouldn't say something stupid, "In a ditch, all decomposed, covered in worms and maggots. Smelling like Eddie's mom's underwear," he quickly waved at Eddie for closure, and Agata saw Bill's expression shift into a defensive one.

"Shut up! That's freaking disgusting," Eddie chided him as he looked away with a disgusted expression.

"S-She's not dead, she's mi-mi-missing," Bill remarked.

Realizing he crossed the line a little, Richie instantly nodded as he looked at his friend, "Sorry Bill, she's missing," he corrected himself promptly.

When Bill started to walk away, Eddie and Richie shared a knowing look while Agata waited for Stan to catch up, "That was close," she mumbled to herself.

"You know, the Barrens aren't that bad. Who doesn't love splashing around in shitty water?" the quipper ironically said, swiftly changing the subject of their conversation.

Before Agata could say anything at his statement, her skin was filled with goosebumps when she noticed Henry Bowers appearing behind the tree next to them. She watched as the older teen grabbed Richie's backpack to yank him backwards in a violent way. That movement led Richie to bump into Stan – who was walking closely behind – and Agata gasped when both fell on the grass.

She froze right where she was standing as she watched Patrick grab Stan's Kippah that had fallen from his head during the fall, "Nice frisbee, flamer," he taunted, grasping it right in front of his face with a nasty smirk.

"Give it back!" Stan begged, reaching to try and pry it out of the bully's hand, but Patrick mercilessly chucked it away as if he was tossing a frisbee into a school bus that passed by them.

"Fucking losers!" he laughed maniacally.

The sound of Belch burping loudly right in front of Eddie's face made Agata look away and as Eddie gagged, Agata felt Patrick approach

her from behind. She froze as she felt his tall body towering over her and the feeling of his breathing down her neck made the already trembling girl scurry away from the bully. Richie had already helped Stan up from the grass and when he urgently looked up to see if Agata was okay he saw the brunette already reaching him at a quick pace and instantly, Richie was already pulling her frame behind his back to shelter her.

The Losers knew that Agata was scared of the group of bullies, but they realized that her fear was so immense that she would freeze like a deer caught in the headlights. They tried to tell her that one day, she might need to run because they might not be around to help her – but she couldn't help it. It was stronger than her, to stay still and panic in their presence.

Agata felt Henry's eyes on her. Again. But to her relief, they all seemed to be just passing by towards his car.

And then Bill, outraged by how his friends were treated, opened his mouth after Henry continued walking after looking away from a fearfully Agata and purposely bumping shoulders with the stutterer after calling quietly calling him a 'loser'.

"You s-s-su-suck, Bowers!" he bravely insulted him.

"Oh no..." Agata whined as she watched Henry and his thugs halting their steps to give their leader an expectant look as they too watched Henry walk back, giving Bill an amused look.

"Shut up, Bill!" Eddie smartly hissed at him as Richie, Stan and Agata walked closer.

"You sa-sa-sa-sa-sa-say something, B-B-B-B-Billy?" Henry mocked as he exaggerated on the stuttering, nearing the younger boy with a provocative smile.

Agata saw a group of girls passing by behind the gang, and she noticed that even though they stopped walking to curiously look at them, the girl that was leading them inside the school quickly grabbed the arm of her friend and beckoned the rest of the girls to follow her – this is how much Henry's infamy was around the school.

Students were scared to intervene every time he was having "fun", they didn't want the same thing happening to them, after all.

Agata didn't blame them. This was hell, but if she had to endure it to remain friends with these boys, then she would gladly take it over being alone again.

"You got a free ride this year, 'cause of your little brother. Ride's over Denbrough," Henry announced, now face-to-face with Bill. Just when Agata feared that Henry was going to hurt him, she saw him notice someone from the corner of his eyes.

When Agata followed his gaze, she remembered that his father was one of the officers with Janice Ripson, and the warning look he was sending his son was enough for Henry to lose his confident expression into a calmer, but still menacing one.

"This summer's gonna hurt a train for you and your faggot friends," he threatened before looking intently towards Agata, who cowered under his gaze, "See ya later, Ray," and after winking her way, he licked his palm and rubbed it all over Bill's cheek, making Belch and Patrick laugh as the three began walking away for good, towards Bowers' car, where Victor was grinning while waiting for his friends.

"The fuck you will," Agata heard Richie mutter under his breath when they were finally distant enough.

Agata stopped hiding behind him, standing next to the messy-haired boy as the group watched the gang drive off.

"I wish he'd go missing," Richie stated critically.

"He's probably the one doing it," Eddie added.

Agata didn't believe in that, but if in the end if it turned out that Henry and his thugs were the one behind the missing kids she wouldn't be surprised.

Alexandra's POV

Something was wrong with her house.

Alexandra had no idea why her daughter didn't make any questions about her screaming last night. The single mom was still on the edge about her chilling encounter.

At exactly three in the morning, Alexandra woke up to the sound of footsteps thumping loudly outside her door, in the corridor. First, she thought Agata woke up to get a glass of water or to use the toilet, but after shaking off her sleepiness she realized that the stepping did not belong to a child.

Alarmed – and reviving the memories of her apartment back in New York being broken into – Alexandra jolted from the comfort of her bed into mama bear mode and grabbed the baseball bat she had hidden behind her wardrobe. She dearly hoped Duncan was as alarmed as she was, but strangely, when she slowly opened the door of her bedroom and peeked into the hall – no barking was heard from the German Shepard.

Alexandra instantly walked towards her daughter's bedroom, down the hall, and slowly opened the door to check up on her. To her relief, Agata was sleeping soundlessly with Duncan, unconcerned, sleeping by her feet in the twin bed.

She was confused but calmed down a little when her dog remained passive. Maybe she heard it in her head? Or maybe she was dreaming about it?

When she was a child, living in the house with her grandfather, she would usually hear him walking around late in the night and eventually, Alexandra got used to it.

Her logical side told her that perhaps it was just her reviving those memories.

But that idea was thrown out of the window when she heard her name being called with his voice.

"Alexandra, get your ass down here and make me a sandwich!"

She almost dropped her bat as she screamed. Because when she turned around, down in the hall and right in front of the stairs, was her grandfather. Glaring at her with hatred and with his usual scowl on his

expression.

"I knew it! You're just a good for nothing! You're a disrespectful little shit as well, aren't ya?!" he started walking towards her, slowly but very menacing, "I open my fucking doors and allow your ass to live here, and you can't even make me a fucking sandwich?!" he yelled thunderously, making Alexandra flinch.

Part of her wanted to enter her daughter's room and lock the door, but even though fear was starting to overwhelm her, she was able to speak through her trembling voice, "You're dead, y-you can't be here! I'm dreaming, this is not real!" she readied the bat over her head, just in case, and then began taking steps back as the figure pretending to be her grandfather approached.

Albert started to laugh, but this time Alexandra realized his voice has shifted into something inhumane, "You stupid girl. You think you got away, Alex? I got you back, and I missed you sooooo much!"

Alexandra stopped breathing as her head began hurting at the familiar, taunting voice, "Y-You"

"I told you, Alex! I told you we were best friends forever! And all of my friends float! You – and your precious little girl that should have never existed – will float! They all will, Alex," It's voice was becoming more baritone the more it spoke, and It's growls grew louder and louder as Alexandra saw her grandfather deform himself into that fucking clown that has been plaguing her memories.

"Stay away from Agata!" as the clown mentioned her daughter, Alexandra forgot all of her childhood fears – letting her motherly instincts take over at once as she hardened her eyes towards the creature, "You hear me?! STAY THE FUCK AWAY FROM AGATA! I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU!" her screaming was getting more erratic and desperate and the clown seemed to have hated that.

It made guttural sounds towards her and when It was close enough, Alexandra was sure It was about to pounce on her, so good thing she had her bat ready to swing.

But then she felt something lick at her ankle and she let out a shriek no

person nearing forty should.

She looked back and noticed Duncan by her side, staring up at her with a curiously look in his dark, brown eyes. She was out of breath because of the adrenaline, so when she looked back to the hall and saw that the clown was gone, Alexandra dropped the bat and started crying quietly. Asking herself what just happened?

She decided to go downstairs and make tea to calm herself down – and as she drunk it by the island counter of the kitchen with Duncan, lying on her feet to make her company, Alexandra came up with a theory to what just happen.

She was stressed.

But as morning came and she helped Agata prepare for her last day of school, (and remind her about the curfew and to come home with one of her friends), Alexandra started to think more clearly.

There is no way she imagined that encounter last night.

Because more memories of her as a child, running from a clown that promised friendship, came floating during the night and she was not able to sleep, paranoid that It might return.

But she felt like It was fucking with her because nothing else happened. She only lied in her, overwhelmed by the sudden memories storming her mind. It was if It had been the one controlling them.

"We're best friends 'til the end, Alex!"

Alexandra zoned out of her theories and thoughts to go back to work as her break ended, there is something wrong about Derry and she hoped her daughter was safe.

5. A Smelly Way to Start Summer

I have a new story cover! It's Agata as a child and as an adult! Her adult face claim is Kate Siegel!

A/N: It's 5 AM and I have a massive headache right now, if there are grammatical mistakes then I'm sorry. I'll check this chapter again when I wake up. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this one and thank you so much for your support!

Thirty Minutes Later

Agata's POV

"Richie, slow down!" Agata squeaked as she grasped the back of his shirt, desperately clinging onto him as she tried not to slide down from the back of his speeding bicycle.

Richie laughed, "Feel that summer breeze, my sweet Aggie, feel that freedom!" He exclaimed happily as he pedaled his bicycle, but slowing it down a little bit at the same time for her consideration.

"The only thing I'll feel is the concrete on my face if you keep riding like this," she scolded him lightly as Richie rode around the corner to enter her street.

"I'll never allow that to happen, Aggie, you're safe with me!" Richie promised confidently.

His statement sent a jolt of thrill through Agata, and she wasn't fully aware of why.

It was Richie's turn to bring Agata home, and even though Agata told the boys how unnecessary it was for them to take turns – and that she could easily catch the school bus – they assured her that bringing her home it was something they wanted to do.

But when it was Richie's turn – it was completely different. Agata was always timid whenever she wrapped her arms around his torso before he started riding his bike but she enjoyed resting her head against his

back and closing her eyes peacefully as Richie took her home. He didn't seem to mind it, he never shrugged her off.

For months now, and long after slightly recovering from the emotional damage from Georgie's disappearance, Agata began having amorous feelings towards Richie Tozier. From watching him speak to just staring at his unruly dark hair and his soulful eyes behind his thick glasses – to the way he could easily make her laugh. She laughed for the first time after Georgie when Richie showed up at her house with a VHS labeled as 'Beetlejuice'.

Alexandra allowed her daughter to watch the movie filled with dark humor and some violence with hopes to cheer her up. And as she prepared the two kids some peanut butter sandwiches while they watched it in the living room, hearing her daughter's laughter when she hasn't even smiled in weeks made it worthy – even when she ended up exposing her thirteen-year-old daughter to a movie not appropriate for her age.

Ever since they watched 'Beetlejuice', Agata saw Richie in a new light. She didn't understand why her cheeks would warm more than before whenever he quipped a dirty joke or when he grinned expectantly her way whenever he jested when the Losers were together.

This newfound feeling was making Agata feel as if she was trying to find the exit of an emotional labyrinth – and every dead-end was a new sentiment that was uncharted territory for the teen girl.

Agata has been gathering enough bravery to talk about what she was going through with her mom, but whenever the thirteen-year-old was about to walk up to her mom and start the conversation, she would always back off and regret it later.

She might not know what's she's going through right now, but Agata knows what anxiety is, and sometimes, when she was alone with Richie, she'd say embarrassing things to him and act differently. She was so ashamed of her actions that at night, Agata would scream into the pillow and wonder why did she even exist at all.

Of course, she was being dramatic, and Richie never seemed to be

weirded out every time she would act differently towards him and not to the other boys.

When Agata started to recognize the houses that she always passed by to reach her own, she began talking over Richie's rambling that she didn't even realize he had started, "Richie, do you wanna come in and watch a movie?" she had to raise her voice a little since they were going a bit fast as the wind passed by.

"Hell yeah! Your mom has the best snacks and I finally wanna show you 'Back to the Future'!" he chirped at her with an excited tone.

When Agata told her friends she preferred reading than watching movies, they all looked at her like she had grown a second head.

They all vowed to show her their favorite blockbusters and even though they had to watch some of these movies in secrecy, Agata has seen 'E.T', 'Gremlins', 'Friday the 13th' (Agata had nightmares about this one), 'Aliens', 'The Terminator', 'A Nightmare on Elm Street' (in which Agata basically missed the best parts while hiding in Richie's arm), 'The Karate Kid' (in which Agata called Ralph Macchio cute and the boys teased her for days about it), 'Ghostbusters' (Agata found it silly since she didn't believe in ghosts), 'The Goonies' and when it was Agata's turn to pick a movie, she chose 'Sixteen Candles' which left the boys all groaning. But nevertheless, if she sat down for their movies they would watch the one she picked.

"Is it scary?" Agata asked Richie, smiling at the memories of them watching all those spooky movies in the dark, all huddled together with seemingly infinite snacks.

"No, but it's awesome! And there's gonna be a sequel this year! I can't wait for you to see this movie, you like reading about fantasy so I know you're going to like it!" he genuinely sounded excited as they finally reached the front lawn of her house. He got off of the bicycle first and extended his arm towards her with a small bow, "Madam?" he beckoned with an overstated courteous tone.

"Why, thank you, kind sir," Agata said with a similar voice, playing along. But when she grabbed hold of his warm hand, the brunette became too timid to continue humoring him, "Uhm, thanks for

bringing me home," she sheepishly told him as she stood on the pavement.

Still holding her hand, Richie grinned, "Any time! I can be your driver whenever you want," he winked at her in a good-naturedly manner, and Agata shouldn't be feeling special, but when she decided to finally pull her hand from his to twirl her long hair, she began screaming internally at how silly she was acting again.

This is why she would usually scream in her pillow. Why couldn't she be herself around him anymore?!

Richie smiled widely at her as he began to turn his bicycle around, he could make it back to his house to retrieve the VHS in five minutes with it so he wanted to hurry back to her, "Okay so, I'm in the mood for sweets. Although having you around already makes my life—"

"Beep beep Richie" Agata softly said as she gave him a meaningful, cheeks warming by the second.

He laughed, out loud and jubilantly, "Whoa! I get it, I'll be on my way, just see if there are any sugary goods in your house, 'kay?" he got onto his bicycle again and began riding it back up the street, "Although having you in my life is the sweetest thing I could have!" he yelled cheekily when he had a safe and good distance away from the girl.

Agata watched his figure disappear as he circled the corner, and when she walked towards her house her cheeks began hurting from smiling too much.

Duncan's excited barking coming from inside the house made Agata hurry her steps to go greet her pet. She took off her backpack and turned it towards her so she could fetch her house keys from inside – but as she grabbed them Agata noticed a small, white blob moving from her peripheral vision.

Her blue eyes quickly looked towards it and to her delight, a cute looking white rabbit was stilled under the tree of her neighbor's front lawn. It wasn't very far away and even though Duncan kept barking for her attention, Agata decided to leave her backpack in front of her

door and approach it.

She was grinning the whole time as she slowly stepped towards it, Agata loved rabbits so the last thing she wanted was to scare it away. Agata liked thinking about the odds of life – what were the odds of her moving from a big city to a small town? What were the odds of her realizing her feelings towards Richie before she left Derry? What were the odds of her returning twenty-seven years later?

What were the odds of that cute white rabbit to stand up on its two hind paws and start speaking while pulling a pocket watch from behind its back?

Well, it seems that the odds were huge on that one because Agata had to halt her steps to make sure her eyes were not deceiving her.

"Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" the rabbit muttered urgently as it checked the time. The rabbit then looked at Agata and after blinking, it began to hop away, towards her house's backyard.

Ignoring Duncan's now more urgent barking coming from inside, and against all of her beliefs about not believing what she read on her fantasy books, Agata chased after it – both terrified and curious to what she just witnessed. Agata wondered if she had fallen from Richie's bike and hit her head on the concrete after all because only in a dream she would see a rabbit that was similar to the character from 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland's' book that she finished reading last summer.

It was her favorite book, after all, but surprisingly, Agata ended up having a strange nightmare of it.

When she arrived in her backyard, she jumped a little when Duncan suddenly started barking right on the other side of the back door – she could let him out, but the oddity of the situation made Agata crave for answers. So, when she looked around her yard, that required some care, she felt disappointment when the white rabbit seemed to have vanished out of thin air.

Then, from the small shed that her mom kept locket, a noise was heard that startled her.

"Oh dear! It seems that I got myself locked inside!"

Agata gasped, that was the rabbit's voice! She approached the shed quickly, and even though her logical side of the brain knew it was locked, her eagerness to see that rabbit again led her to childishly try to pry the doors open, and even when the chains attached to the big, rusty locker jiggled – reminded the brunette how impossible it was for her to open without a key – Agata frowned, trying again as if she was strong enough to rip the door open.

Sighing, and looking around to make sure no one was watching, Agata spoke, "Hello? Mr. Rabbit? Are you in there?"

Seconds passed by, and just when Agata called herself 'stupid' and turned to return to her house, a giggle was heard from inside the shed.

"Hello there! I thought I was alone!" the voice, Agata presumed to belong to the rabbit, greeted her with an overjoyed tone.

Intrigued, Agata decided to continue talking, "Hi uhm, you're inside my shed."

"Oh yes! Hehehehe, how silly of me! I was looking for the hole, but something nice smelled in here that I couldn't help but to check it out! And now – hehe – I'm stuck!" its happy tone changed into a nervous one, "But oh dear! Oh dear! I'll be late! The Queen will have my head!"

"Oh, right she likes doing that," Agata gulped, her hand unconsciously touching her neck. Dream or not, she felt pitiful towards the rabbit now.

"Yes indeed! And besides that, I'll be late for a tea party as well! Just like that red bull, who is always late because it keeps chasing itself!"

Both Agata and the rabbit began laughing at the little quip, she had to admit while Richie's jokes were funnier, this rabbit had a good sense of humor. When she stopped laughing, however, the rabbit continued – quite hysterically as well, throwing Agata completely off and even startling her a bit when it was not stopping.

"Mr. Rabbit, are you okay?" she asked as she rested her eat against the door. Momentarily, Agata heard him calm down as a throaty growl followed after the laughter.

"I'm fine dear, just a tad bit hungry – that's all," the rabbit replied with a low voice, "Curiouser and curiouser!" the rabbit suddenly cried, "Something does smell divine in here, m'dear!"

"What is it?" Agata inquired with a confused frown. It was just an old shed that probably smelled rusty.

"You!"

Abruptly, Agata was sent back when the doors violently opened in front of her – as Duncan's barks were suddenly more desperate now – Agata winced her body rolled on the dry, grassy patches and the dirt from the blunt force. When she recovered, Agata looked up towards the shed and her blue eyes widened at the nightmarish sight before her.

It was a clown – wearing a baggy silk suit of silver with orange pompoms and a collar ruff. It had a haunting white face and a bald head, with red hair on either side. Its mouth red clown smile widened predatorily as Its big, golden eyes pined Agata down.

Agata was now sure if she wasn't hearing Duncan's constant barking, she would be dreaming, "This doesn't make any sense!" she screamed fearfully.

The clown, grinned even more, "Why not, dearie? After all, you are talking to me! So, why can't this be real?" It asked mockingly.

"W-Who-What are you?!" Quickly standing up, Agata started taking steps back from the creature.

"My apologies! I'm Pennywise, the Dancing Clown! And I'm just so frightened of being late to the Queen's court but perhaps, you can help me, dear Alice!" It bowed to Agata, but all the movement did was trigger Agata's flight or fly.

"My name is not Alice..." Agata mumbled as she frowned.

The air suddenly dropped around the brunette, and when Pennywise raised Its body from the bowing, It no longer was smiling – but staring at Agata with a longing expression as droll started sliding down from the corner of Its mouth.

The sight was enough to make her queasy.

"Time to float, m'dear Agata! But not to worry, your fugitive mommy will be next!"

Before Agata could exhale, Penny pounced towards her – instigating her to instantly run away from her fight or flight response. As Duncan barked, Agata screamed as loud as she could – because her mom taught her to always yell if she's ever being taken by a stranger – as the teen ran through her backyard, around the house again, towards the road. She desperately hoped for a car passing by, and even though she wanted to look back, every instinct in her core was telling her to keep going forward.

And when she was about to reach for the road, Agata did what she considered as a "cliché tripping trope from horror movies" as her foot got trapped in a hole, and landed face-first on the tar. She felt the wind being knocked out of her chest, but the adrenaline made her look back from where Pennywise had been chasing her.

It was gone.

Breathing heavily as her heartbeat dangerously fast, Agata stayed on the road for a few seconds, afraid to move. It wasn't until she could hear Duncan's barking again that she snapped out of her frightened state. And as she did, she began feeling her skin sting from the palm of her hands, chin, and knees – and as she looked over at her injuries, she notices that they were all skinned, bleeding and covered with dirt.

Agata was so terrorized and confused about what just happened to her that when a car honked right next to her, she let out a pitched scream and scrambled to her knees to crawl towards the pavement.

"Get out of the road you damn kid!" a man barked at her as drove by her trembling figure.

Agata didn't even look at him to apologize, her widened eyes just stared at her house and she paled when she noticed something on her porch's rail.

There was a red balloon tied to it.

Fifteen Minutes Later

Duncan whined as he rested his head on Agata's lap.

She was now inside her house, sitting on the couch of her living room with the television on to create background noise. As Agata petted Duncan, bringing her comfort, she eyed her front door intently and expectantly. Her skinned injuries still burned a little, but she at least she had used a cloth to wash them all with water, but the more they kept stinging the more Agata realized that she dreadfully didn't imagine her encounter with that demonic clown.

She now pondered the following: to tell or not to tell her mom – and Richie, who would be here any second now, she hoped.

Being alone was the last thing Agata wanted right now, and even though she had Duncan, she needed a human near her.

They would call her insane and her mom would scold at her for thinking she was lying. Agata knew that someone in their right mind wouldn't believe a kid that would cry that a child-eating clown chased after them. It was just too absurd!

Then why did that just happened?!

A lot of questions were racing through her mind.

Was the Boogeyman real?

Was Santa Claus real?

Fairies? Unicorns? Elfs? Goblins? Ghosts?!

Hell, she has watched so many horror movies with her boys that Agata suddenly felt like crying if every monster she saw on those

films were real.

Agata did end up crying for a few minutes before Duncan was able to calm her down. It seems that her dog tried to warn her before, and even though he couldn't help her Agata had a feeling that Duncan sensed Pennywise before It had revealed Itself to her.

She felt stupid, too. To chase after a talking rabbit and converse with a stranger.

But at the same time, her restless mind began working on a theory: Pennywise knew that she had read 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'. Why did It choose the White Rabbit form, then? Agata shuddered at the thought of being watched by It, and that was enough to make her look around the room in a paranoid manner.

But Duncan's passive nature at the moment relaxed her a bit, maybe It was gone.

But then, when Duncan began barking again she was on high alert, eyes widening as she looked around the room while rising to her feet. With a frightened expression, Agata's eyes followed Duncan as the loyal dog made his way towards the front door, and seconds later, a knock imitating 'Shave and a Haircut' was heard and Agata instantly knew Richie was the one on the other side.

She walked up to her foyer and swung the door open quickly, and she seemed to have interrupted a banter between Richie and Eddie, who were glaring at each other and trying to pry the VHS from each other's hands – although Agata noticed that Richie smirked as Eddie glared at him – when the two landed their eyes on their friend, both boys immediately widened their eyes.

"Holy shit! Aggie, what the hell happened to you?!" Richie exclaimed as he let himself in, his dark eyes were staring at her skinned chin with concern while Eddie, who walked inside as well, pointed at her exposed knees.

"Fuck! Have you disinfected that?!" the shorter boy inquired urgently as Duncan sniffed his shoes curiously.

Agata had no idea why Eddie was here, but she was so happy to see him, "I" she paused, taking in their anxious faces, and Agata wilted under their eyes. What could she tell them? That she was attacked by a white rabbit that changed into a demonic clown? "I tripped while playing with Duncan," she explained coyly.

Richie and Eddie both shared incredulous looks.

"Are you kidding me?" Richie deadpanned skeptically.

"Uh, yeah Agata, that doesn't sound right. You're not usually clumsy," Eddie said, looking confused and cringing when he finally noticed her skinned skin on the palm of her hands, "Jesus fuck – did you disinfected that?" he repeated himself, sounding a little frantic.

Seeing the opportunity to change the subject, Agata shook her head towards Eddie – ignoring Richie's stare – and waved her arm towards the hall behind her, "I washed it with a cloth–"

Eddie immediately spluttered, "Water won't kill the germs!" he unzipped his red fanny pack and from it, he grabbed an antibiotic cream and a band-aid.

No one was surprised to see Eddie prepared for something like this after all his fanny pack was equipped with a lot of medical supplies. Ignoring Richie's questioning stare, Agata ignored how unusually quiet he was when the three moved to the living room, with Duncan trailing right behind them, for Eddie to start treating Agata's wounds properly.

She was sitting down on the couch while Richie took the seat next to her – and Duncan rested his head comfortably on the boy's laps as he received pets – and while Eddie knelt in front of her, opening the cap of the cream.

But when Eddie realized he was face to face to Agata's legs, and even though the skirt she was using was hovering above her knees allowing Agata's underwear to remain hidden, the dark-haired boy's cheeks began to darken as he cleaned his throat while giving Agata an anxious look.

She smiled and nodded at him, giving Eddie the consent. And when he started applying the cream on her wound, she winced a little at the mild stinging started to begin.

Richie cooed teasingly as he smirked at Eddie, "That's right Eds, rub it reeeaaal slowly."

"Shut the fuck up and don't call me that!" the hypochondriac shrieked, his cheeks reddening even more after Richie's input.

Agata managed to giggle at them, even though she should feel at least bashful, Eddie was like a brother to her and he was always cleaning up wounds because sometimes the boys would fall from their bikes or Bowers would get them alone.

And even though Richie didn't pressure her to tell him what truly happened, Agata knew that he would bring it up one day when she least expected. But for the rest of the afternoon, after Eddie expertly cleaned up her wounds, (and ignored Agata's sulky face when he had to place a band-aid on her chin), Richie finally told her that he had invited Eddie along because he hasn't watched 'Back to the Future' as well – and Agata didn't mind it a bit.

She even seemed to have calmed down as the three enjoyed their little movie session. With her sitting between the two and Duncan lying under their feet, Agata felt safe. But when Richie's fingers slowly touched her hand that had been resting against her thigh, beckoning her to hold his hand, Agata felt as if her encounter with that stupid clown never happened as she linked her hands with his.

Next Day

Since she thought they were going to the Barrens, Agata chose to wear her high waist, button front denim shorts and a simple lavender t-shirt tucked inside the shorts paired with her ragged white sneakers. And per usual, with her silver chain was always around her neck.

But now that Bill told them they were going to the sewer, Agata was a little anxious about dirtying her only sneakers that were already on their last days.

Yesterday, when Alexandra came home from work and saw the band-aids on her daughter, she was quickly worried over Agata. Richie and Eddie had gone home by then so Agata easily told her mom that she tripped on a root in the backyard and fell on the ground face-first – even adding a small chuckle as if she was making fun of her sudden clumsiness.

Agata, after having a soundless and peaceful night while sleeping, decided to not tell her mom about the clash she had yesterday. She just didn't want to stress her mom even further with a story that sounded insane. Her mom was already anxious about wanting to ask for a raise at the diner so Agata backed off and cleaned out all of the worries and fussing her mom could've given her if she decided to go with the true story route.

And now she was at Eddie's, sitting at the small, round kitchen table as she watched Bill and Richie open his cabinets to fill Bill's backpack with snacks.

"Take everything but the Delicious Deals, guys. My mom loves them," Eddie warned as Bill and Richie began grabbing anything their hands could land on. Agata sighed as she rested her head against her hand before Eddie spoke again, directly to Bill, "Hey! First you said the Barrens, and now you're saying the sewer. I mean, what if we get caught?" he pointed out as he leaned against the sink.

"We won't, Eds. The sewers are pu-public works," Bill assured as Richie passed by a scowling Eddie, towards the cabinets behind the smaller boy, "W-We're the public, aren't we?"

Agata watched as Richie opened the cabinet to reveal a cluster of pill bottles. Her eyes widened at the amount that they were as Richie turned around to give Eddie a playful grin.

"Hey, Eddie? Are these your birth control pills?" the trashmouth asked as he turned to look at the small pharmacy Mrs. Kasprack was apparently running on her kitchen.

Eddie gave him a tired look before he walked forward to shut the cabinet's door closed, "Yeah, and I'm saving it for your sister," he retorted quickly, "This is private stuff!"

Agata rolled her eyes as she stood from her chair, "Do you guys even know what birth control pills are?" she asked, playfully smiling as both boys paled at her question.

Although they were used to having a girl in their group, sometimes their immature perspective about the female world would come back around and bite them right in their ass.

Bill was smiling amusedly as both Richie and Eddie stared at her with a terrified expression. But she decided to be merciful and shrug before making her way towards Bill, who was grinning her way.

"Bill, don't forget to pack some water bottles. My mom wants us to stay hydrated," she told him innocently.

Richie and Eddie visibly relaxed behind her, relieved that she didn't continue.

The four then headed out of the kitchen, Bill leading them as Agata walked behind him, pacing quickly towards the front door as the show on the television sounded in the background. But as Bill opened the door, a questioning voice came from the living room.

"Eddie Bear, where are guys off to in such a rush?" Sonia Kaspbrack asked from her lazy chair as she painted her nails.

Agata decided to remain hidden behind Bill and Richie. She didn't like Eddie's mom, and even though she was always polite to Mrs. Kaspbrack, Agata avoided looking at and talking to the widowed as much as possible. There was something about the overweight woman that ticked Agata wrong, from the way she gave Agata the stink eye to the way she controlled her son or fussed too much over him.

"Um," Bill began, looking away as he thought about an excuse. There was no way they could tell Mrs. Kaspbrack that they were taking her precious Eddie to the sewer, she would've never let him go, "Ju-Just my backyard, Mrs. K. I got a new..." he trailed off, and Agata could feel the leader of their group trying to come up with an excuse.

She decided to help him, "A new croquet set!" Agata supplied quickly.

"Jeez, spit it out, B-Bill!" Richie added, convincing Eddie's mom

further.

"Okay," Sonia drawled suspiciously. And Agata tried to smile as she felt her squinted eyes her glaring at her, "Oh and sweetie," her gaze softened as she addressed her son, "Don't go rolling around on the grass. Especially if it's just been cut. You know how bad your allergies can get," Agata frowned at the pointed look Mrs. Kaspbrak gave her son.

It looked so controlling.

"Yes, mom," Eddie told her before started to head out with everyone else doing the same, "Let's go," he hurried.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Sonia called out, halting them by the door.

Agata smiled sympathetically when Eddie sighed. He walked up to his mom and kissed her cheek and as soon as he did, Richie laughed and started hitting Bill's arm as if he hadn't witnessed it either. Agata quickly hushed him, sending him a warning look but the boy grinned even more as Eddie returned to them with an annoyed expression.

"Do you want one from me too, Mrs. K?" Richie asked the woman jocularly.

Agata quickly stepped outside with Bill as Eddie quickly pushed Richie out of the door. He was laughing while Eddie stayed behind to spare his mom one last look.

"Sorry, mommy!" Eddie closed the door and quickly attacked Richie with a punch on his arm, "You fucking idiot!"

Agata shared a look with Bill before she heard Duncan bark at her from the front yard. She felt bad for leaving him tied to the mailbox but Eddie's mom forbade Duncan from entering her house – it was lucky enough she let Eddie near him.

As Richie and Eddie bickered while they followed Agata to fetch him, Duncan instantly started licking Agata's hands as she patted his head. Bill helped her by untying his leash and handing it to her, and she smiled thankfully as Eddie, who stopped throwing insults at Richie,

softly patted Duncan on his head as well.

"Sorry about my mom not letting Duncan in," he told Agata gloomily.

She shrugged, giving him a comforting smile, "It's okay, I understand."

But truly, Agata was still too young to understand Sonia Kaspbrack's actions.

Twenty Minutes Later

"That's poison ivy. And that's poison ivy. And that's poison ivy," Stan stated as he pointed at random tree branches above the group.

"Where? Where's the poison ivy?" Eddie asked him anxiously.

"Nowhere. Not every fucking plant is poison ivy, Stanley!" Richie told the two with an annoyed expression as he grabbed a long stick.

Agata hopped on top of a rock and looked at them, "Richie's right, you know?"

Stan shrugged carelessly, "I'm just saying. Don't come at me if you get itchy skin."

They were now at the entrance of the sewer, it was covered with overgrown vines and the sewage gas smelled so bad that Agata scrunched her nose with disgust – but that didn't stop Bill and Richie from going inside the dark, damp tunnel. She stayed behind as Duncan sniffed the surroundings but she made sure he didn't wander off too far away.

"Okay, I'm starting to get itchy now," Eddie complained as he scratched his left wrist, "and I'm pretty sure this is not good for my—"

"No you're not, it's in your head," Agata quickly assured, "Trust me, you're fine," her blue eyes stared at his worried brown ones as he nodded.

"Do you use the same bathroom as your mother?" Richie suddenly

asked Eddie.

He was taken back before he responded, "Sometimes, yeah."

"Then you probably have crabs."

Agata sighed, but then a dead rat floating nearby made her squeak and take a step towards Stan, who was busy looking around the tunnel with critical eyes, wishing he wasn't here.

"That's so not funny!" Eddie exclaimed.

Bill and Richie kept walking further inside whilst Eddie, Stan and Agata remained back at the entrance, the three had an unsure and disgusted expression on their faces and the more Agata scanned the tunnel and smelled the odor that the water coming out from the sewer was transmitting the more she wanted to join Duncan outside in the stream.

Agata saw Richie slowly look back at them, looking expectant, "Aren't you guys coming in?"

Agata watched as Bill walked deeper in the long, cavernous sewer pipe, which extended into pitch darkness. Beyond it though, Agata could get a sense of something lurking, something waiting. She shook it off and decided to not look into the darkness anymore.

Eddie shook his head as he pointed at the water Richie was standing on, "Uh-uh, that's greywater."

Richie rolled his eyes, "What the hell's greywater?!" he asked.

"It's basically" Agata watched as Eddie pause as he slightly gagged, "piss and shit. So I'm just telling you, you guys are splashing around in millions of gallons of Derry pee. So..."

"Ew. That explains the smell, sorry, there's no way I'm going in there," Agata declared promptly, her nose scrunched up with disgust clear on her face.

Richie dipped his branch in the water and brought the tip to his nose for him to sniff.

"A-Are you serious?" Eddie asked him exasperatedly.

"Doesn't smell like caca to me, señor!" Richie told him, making Agata smile at one of his many cartoonish voices.

Eddie however, wasn't as amused as she was, "O-Okay, I can smell that from here!"

"It's probably just your breath wafting back into your mouth," Richie snarked at him.

Agata started to bite the bottom of her lip to repress the amused smile threatening to show.

"Have you ever heard of a staph infection?!" Eddie yelled at him, his exclaim echoing through the tunnel.

"Oh, I'll show you a staph infection!" Richie retorted challenging, pointing his branch at the smaller boy.

"This is so unsanitary. You're literally—" Agata grinned when she saw Stan roll his eyes at the bickering when she glanced at him, "—This is literally like swimming inside of a toilet bowl right now!" Eddie continued rambling anxiously, and Agata sometimes was still impressed at how fast he could speak, "Have you ever heard of Listeria?"

Agata's eyes widened when she noticed Richie picking up a random, abandon shirt from the water with his branch. She carefully stepped back in time as Richie tossed the wet and dirty piece of clothing at Eddie – making him scream with panic while dodging it.

"Richie! That's disgusting!" Agata scolded him lightly as Eddie nodded with an irritated frown.

"Are you retarded?! You're the reason why we're in this position right now!" He complained.

It was Agata's turn to frown at him, "Eddie! Don't use that foul word choice!" she reprimanded him. Saying swears and dropping f-bombs was something, but using words that crossed the line of becoming too offensive made Agata instantly sort things right by rebuking it. And

even though she felt like a nagger when she did it, the boys would learn to avoid going too far when she was around.

"Sorry Agata," Eddie meekly said, giving her an apologetic look, "But Richie started it!"

"Guys!"

They all quickly shut up to look at Bill, who was looking at them with a serious expression while his torch pointed at a sneaker he had fished from the muck.

"Shit," Stan began as his voice cracked, "Don't tell me that's—"

"No Ge-Ge-Georgie wore galoshes," Bill stated as he walked up to Richie, who met him halfway.

He held his torch upwards, to flash it better inside the shoe, and nodded at Richie for him to take a look inside.

"Whose sneaker is it?" Agata asked apprehensively. Afraid of the answer.

Richie hesitated, knowing that the answer might affect Agata more than it would to them, "It's Betty Ripsom's" he grimly told her.

Agata gasped, covering her mouth as her stomach churned unpleasantly – everyone looked concerned about her at once. They knew that Agata was starting to get along with Betty before her disappearance last year and even though the two didn't hang out after school, Betty was nice towards Agata so the boys had hoped the two could've been closer friends.

"Oh shit. Oh God, of fuck!" Eddie started whining, fearfully.

"No way..." she whispered, trying not to cry.

Eddie hesitated before putting his hand on her shoulder, "I'm sorry Agata..." he softly comforted her, implying that Betty was dead.

She didn't want to believe it, Betty was too young to die. But as she thought more clearly, this was the disturbing reality of the world:

children could die. They do die every day. And there was nothing she could do about it.

Agata couldn't help but to sob a little, "W-We should tell the police."

"The police?! I don't like this!" Eddie quickly exclaimed, taking his hand off her shoulder to look around in a panicking manner.

It seems that Richie thought it was a good time to joke around, "How do you think Betty feels? Running around these tunnels with only one frickin' shoe?" he laughed as he hopped on one leg.

Everyone looked at him, simultaneous having the same thought: *Did he really just say that?*

"Beep beep, Richie!" Agata chided, uncharacteristically upset. Even her feelings towards the boy and adoration for his quips didn't blind her to the fact that his joke was distasteful and uncalled for.

Richie quickly lost his smile when he realized that the public didn't receive his joke the way he intended so he stopped hopping and tried to ignore the unpleasant emotions of having his Aggie be irked towards him.

"What if she's still here?" Stan keenly asked, cutting the tense silence that Richie previously caused.

They all lock eyes with each other and seconds later, Bill and Richie turn around to walk further into the dark tunnel with Stan's pondering in their heads.

"Eddie, come on!" Richie called, not wanting to force Agata to enter the sewer after the emotional blown of finding Betty's shoe really got to her.

Eddie looked back, watching Duncan dig a hole near the small river while pondering if he should just leave, "My mom will have an aneurysm if she finds out that we're playing down here! I'm serious!"

"You consider this playing?" Agata mumbled as she decided to look around for a long branch as well on woods soil.

"Bill?" Richie looked at the leader for what to do next.

Bill, who Agata thought has been uncommonly quiet, spoke up, "If-If I was Betty Ripsom, I would want us to find me. Ge-Ge-Georgie too."

They all absorbed his words, and Agata sighed as she hugged herself.

"What if I don't want to find them?" Eddie stated, surprising the group as they all looked at him, "I mean, no offense, Bill, but I don't want to end up like" he trailed off, not finishing his sentence, but they all knew what whose name he was thinking, "I don't wanna go missing either."

"He has a point," Stan spoke up, and Agata wasn't surprised he was agreeing with Eddie.

And if she was being honest with herself, she thought the same thing. After her encounter with the clown yesterday, the last thing Agata wanted was to walk inside a dark tunnel to search for a person.

"Y-You too?" Bill asked hurtfully, then, he looked at Agata with a hopeful expression, "Aggie?"

She felt their eyes staring directly at her, but she didn't falter as she gave Bill a sad frown, "Sorry Bill..."

Even Richie looked disappointed.

"Of course she won't either! It's summer!" Stan cried, "We're supposed to be having fun! This isn't fun" he said as Richie shrugged at Bill, "This is scary and disgusting."

The tense mood was interrupted when Duncan started to suddenly bark behind them, and as Agata turned around to see what was stressing her dog a sudden figure showed up, splashing on the water loudly and startling the group as they all silently watched a chubby boy, barely standing and looking at them, beaten and bloodied.

As Duncan approached him, the boy got so scared to be attacked by the dog that he quickly stood up again – only to collapse as his legs gave out soon after. It was clear that he has been running for a long time now. But Duncan wasn't aggressive that easily, so when he

sniffed the boy's scent and sensed no danger from him whilst Richie and Bill made their way out of the tunnel, he started barking at them to come to help him out.

"Holy shit! What happened to you?!" Richie exclaimed as Agata decisively made her way to the chubby boy.

"Oh my God! Don't move, stay there!" Agata quickly advised him as she felt the water wetting her socks when she stepped inside of the river, "It's okay, he doesn't bite," she calmed him down, "Guys! A little help?!" she looked back at the boys, giving them a look as she tried to help him up.

Eddie and Stan were quick to obey as Richie and Bill began preparing their bikes for them to leave and help out the bruised kid.

Don't forget to leave a review, they make my day!

6. Ben Hanscom Tells a Scary Story

Sorry for not uploading in a while. Hope you like this chapter!

Agata knew Henry Bowers was ruthless, but to actually try to carve his name on Ben's belly with a real knife? That was psychopathic.

As she, Duncan, and Richie waited in the Richards Alley, next to the Center Street Drugstore and she tried not to squirm at the sight of the blood tainting his shirt. Duncan had been friendly enough to sit next to Ben as the overweight boy patted his head with a smile. It seems that Ben liked dogs.

"So, you said your name was Ben, right?" she began, clearing her throat and getting the attention of both boys.

"Yeah," the chubby boy smiled amicably. Agata liked that.

"I'm Agata, and this is Richie and that," she pointed at her loyal pet, "Is Duncan."

The German Shepard barked in response, making Ben grin.

"Pleased to meet your acquaintance," Richie said in a terrible British voice.

But Agata ended up giggling anyway because that's what Richie did—he made her laugh.

When Eddie and Stan returned—with supplies that Agata suspiciously thought they couldn't afford—Eddie immediately began working on Ben's gash. Ben seemed to be a little sheepish to show his belly full of rolls in front of Agata and when she noticed that, she turned her back and moved to stand close to Stan, who glanced at her with an odd expression before focusing on Eddie's treatment again.

"Just suck the wound!" Richie told Eddie.

"I need to focus right now," Eddie snarked at him.

"You need to focus?" the trashmouth repeated.

"Yeah, can you go get me something?"

"Jesus, what do you need?!" Richie asked nervously as he saw all the blood from the bandage Eddie was trying to apply.

"Go get my bifocals. I hid 'em in my second fanny pack."

"Why do you have two fanny packs?" Stan asked, surprised.

"I need to focus right now, and it's a long story," Eddie replied.

"Where's Bill?" she asked, looking behind towards the alley's exit, "Why is he standing there?"

Stan shrugged, "Probably waiting for Beverly Marsh," he mumbled.

On cue, she watched as a girl that she recognized as Beverly walk up to Bill, his expression as if he was caught by a syren's song. Seeing the two walk down the alley, Agata quickly averted her eyes back to Ben's wound and cringed when Eddie applied some antibiotic ointment and Ben's face scrunched up with mild pain.

"Oh God, he's bleeding, oh my God!" Stan exclaimed.

"You have to suck the wound before you apply the Band-Aids! This is 101!"

"You don't know what you're talking about!"

"Are you okay?" everyone heard Beverly ask, "That looks like it hurts."

Duncan approached the new person, smelling Beverly to see what scent she gave. The redhead didn't move as he continued smelling her, and when she was approved, Duncan sat next to her and licked her hand, making her giggle.

Ben shook his head, smiling nervously when he noticed her, "Oh. No, I'm good. I just fell."

"Yeah, right into Henry Bowers," Richie commented dryly.

"Beep beep Richie," Agata sighed and Bill gave him a look.

"Why?! It's the truth!"

"You sure they got the right stuff to fix you up?" Beverly asked Ben with a gentle smile, and Agata didn't miss the way the chubby boy blushed under it.

"Y-You know, w-w-we'll take care of him. Uh, t-thanks again, Beverly," Bill told her warmly.

"Sure, maybe I'll see you around," she said as she properly patted Duncan in the head this time.

Agata, who decided that this might be the opportunity to make a new friend, spoke up before she could leave, "We're going to the quarry tomorrow!" at her sudden outburst, she felt the boys give her a surprised look, "If you wanna come and swim with us, show up!" the blue-eyed girl offered with a kind, but shy smile.

Beverly, who wasn't used to having girls her age treating her nicely, was stunned for a moment before smiling back, "Good to know. Thanks!" and with that, the group of six losers watched her walk away after she waved goodbye.

Agata waved back, smiling eagerly before giving Richie an upset look.

"Nice going bringing up Bowers in front of her!" she scolded him.

"Yeah, Richie, you know what happened," Stan added, shaking his head at his friend.

"Yeah, dude, you heard what she did," Eddie whispered as if he was scared Beverly might still hear him.

Agata rolled her eyes, "They're just stupid rumors! I bet they're not even true!"

"What'd she do?" Ben asked innocently.

"More like 'Who'd she do?'. From what I hear the list is longer than my wang," Richie joked as he grinned at Eddie—who looked away, disgusted.

Agata seemed to be done with him as well, she sometimes wondered why did she have to crush on Richie of all the boys. But then he remembered how he acted when it was just the two of them, and that was enough.

"That's not saying much," Stan stated, giving a small eye roll.

"L-Like Agata said, t-t-t-they're jus-just rumors," Bill said with a final tone.

Richie shrugged, "Anyway, Bill had her back in third grade," he told Ben, who looked at Bill thoughtfully, "They kissed in the school play! The reviews say you can't fake that sort of passion!"

Stan gave Bill a knowing smirk as Bill looked away, blushing.

Agata was happy to know another thing about her friends. They've known each other for almost a year now but every day she tried to learn more about their past, because these boys have known each other since third grade, and she was the most recent member of their group. So Agata always enjoyed every little information they slipped out.

"Now pip-pip, and tally-ho, my good fellows and fair lady! I do believe this chap requires our utmost attention!" Richie exclaimed, bringing back his bad English accent. He looked at Eddie and pushed him down, towards Ben, "Get in there, Dr. K! Come on, fix him up!"

"Why don't you shut the fuck up, Einstein, because I know what I'm doing and I don't want you doing the British guy on me right now," Eddie snapped at him, speaking quickly as always.

"Suck the wound!" Richie interrupted him, "Get in there!"

Agata chuckled, covering her mouth quickly as Eddie gave her a look of betrayal. She couldn't help it, she really couldn't help but laugh at his jokes.

7:22 PM

Being Summer, the days prolonged longer so when Richie dropped Agata and Duncan off in her house it was still daylighted out. She bravely gave him a peck on the cheek as thanks and he left doing a wheelie on his bicycle.

Agata was always anxious about being home alone ever since her encounter with Pennywise, but she tried not to think about it as she quickly locked the door and put on the 'The Great Mouse Detective' VHS to pass time until her mom comes home just ten minutes after eight. So if she focused on the animated, bright movie until there she'd be fine.

So she grabbed an apple Fruit Roll-Up and ate it slowly to still have enough hunger for dinner and to cool her body down from the summer heat outside. Duncan remained near her, lying on the carpet under her feet, and his calmness relaxed Agata enough to actually pay attention to the movie she had seen many times before, but that never ceased to love.

By the time the movie was at its final climax, Duncan alerted Agata that someone was approaching her door and seconds later, she heard the familiar keys unlocking the door and saw her mom walking in, still dressed with her uniform and long hair on a messy bun, but with a smile on her face when Agata ran to the foyer to greet her.

Dinner was instant mac and cheese, but at least Alexandra made up for dessert when she brought home half of the banana split she didn't eat for Agata. It was delicious, and dinner ended up with them sitting on the couch, watching an episode of 'Full House' before it was time for Agata to go brush her teeth and get ready to sleep.

Nearing eleven, Alexandra tucked Agata in and kissed her forehead while Duncan took his spot at the end of the thirteen-year-old bed. Alexandra patted her loyal dog on his head as bid the two a good night's sleep before she returned to the living room, where the television was now a background noise as she washed the dishes.

Since Agata told her mom she was going to swim down in the quarry with the boys tomorrow, Alexandra returned to her daughter's room

—who was now soundly sleeping—and placed her favorite one-piece swimsuit on her vanity desk. Alexandra smiled fondly at it. It was a simple baby blue suit with white polka dots but Alexandra remembered the days when they went to the beach during summer just two years ago.

Time passes faster.

It was nearing one in the morning when Alexandra finally went to sleep, this time there were no steps outside her door. And to this day, Alexandra has been forcefully ignoring what she witnessed the other night. Her daughter was safe, and she was going to swim with her friends tomorrow. Everything was fine.

The next day

Duncan stayed home.

Since it was her mom's day off, he stayed there with her. Agata thought it wouldn't be a good idea to bring Duncan to the quarry because (she didn't tell her mom this part) she and the losers were supposed to jump off a very high cliff. And it all seemed too dangerous for a dog to be around.

But, as she stood at the edge with four of her close friends and the new member to be affiliated to their group, Ben Hanscom, it was doubtful that any of them genuinely wanted to jump at this point.

When Agata arrived at the cliff, she was a little self-conscious when she stripped down her mustard-colored baby doll dress and white Capri leggings and at least the boys seemed to be have been shy enough to look away when she joined them by the edge wearing her one-piece swimsuit—except for Richie, he always stared—but Agata had been terrified when she realized they were on their tighty withies.

She was too embarrassed to even comment on that.

When the awkwardness was cast aside, Agata watched as the boys held a contest to who could spit out the furthest into the green, dirty

water below where they were supposed to swim.

First Richie, then Stan, Bill, Ben, and then they all looked at Agata with an expectant look, she shook her head and motioned Eddie to spit.

"This is gonna be easy," the smaller boy grinned before spitting something that didn't even reach the water below.

"Oh my God, that was terrible! I win!" Richie cheered.

"You win?"

"Yeah."

"Did you see my loogie?!" Eddie complained.

"That went the farthest! It's by distance!"

"Mass. It's always been mass," Eddie insisted.

"What the--what is mass?!" Richie exclaimed.

"Who cares how far it goes? It matters how cool it looks, like it's green or it's white or juicy and fat."

Agata scrunched her nose with disgust, "Lovely," she muttered.

"All right," Bill spoke up, interjecting the two, "Who's first?"

There was a pregnant pause between the six teens, all of them looked down with fear. And since Agata felt like Richie was about to say something like 'ladies first' she was about to jump when another feminine voice spoke up from behind them.

"I'll go!"

They turned around and saw Beverly Marsh getting off her bike, dropping it on the ground as she grinned at them. Agata smiled at her now short hair, thinking that it suited her. But as the redhead unbuttoned her button-up dress with a flower pattern but she then gasped when she realized that Beverly was wearing nothing but her a

white bra and blue panties.

Agata wasn't the one to stare but even though the two were the same age, the brunette felt self-conscious about her body when she saw how well developed Beverly was.

Agata was still on training bras, and yet Beverly was wearing one that was similar to her mom's.

She was stunned for a moment.

"Sissies!" Beverly laughed as the group stepped back when Beverly ran towards the cliff, passing by them, and jumping off the cliff with mirthful laughter.

"What the fuck!" Richie yelled as they watched Beverly descend into the murky water.

When she hit the surface, Agata winced and became a little concerned, but when Beverly remerged from the water and send a bright grin that could be seen from up where they were standing, flabbergasted and impressed, Agata started to giggle as she felt a sudden rush of adrenaline coarse through her body.

Richie noticed his friend stepping back, and he almost instinctively tried to reach for Agata when she also jumped out of the cliff.

"AGGIE!"

Agata was screaming and laughing the whole journey down to the water, her heart was in her throat but it didn't matter—she felt alive! When she hit the surface, she swam upwards with her eyes closed and when she finally breathed, Beverly was already next to her, laughing and holding her arm as Agata recovered from the fall.

"Oh my God!" Agata squealed as she shared a big grin with Beverly.

"Oh, holy shit! We just got showed up by two girls!" Richie's loud voice could be heard from the water, and Agata stuck her tongue at them, still filled with adrenaline.

"Come on!" Beverly called.

"The water's awesome, you guys!" Agata yelled as she swam a little away to avoid being crushed by any of them.

Beverly followed after and soon the two began hearing splashes from the boys as they jumped off, one by one.

Minutes went by and the seven went from splashing each other to getting on each other's backs to see who could push the other team down into the water first. Agata watched as Beverly got into Bill's back while Richie on Ben's and splashed Eddie when she saw him try to sneak up on her. He laughed as she began chasing him.

"I already won! We already won!" Richie cheered jubilantly and seconds later, he managed to push Beverly into the water, "They're down! Yes!"

Agata looked behind her and grinned, "C'mon Eddie, our turn!" she grabbed his hand under the water and swam back towards them.

"W-What?!" Eddie gasped, he was afraid he couldn't carry Agata over his shoulders.

But they were both the smallest of the group, and Eddie was stronger than he looked like. So when he was able to carry her, Richie whistled as he, the winner, was now facing against Agata and whoever won this round, would win the game entirely.

"Go, Agata! Go, Eddie!" Beverly cheered as Bill and Stan watched, grinning.

It was one. Eddie approached Ben and Agata tried to push Richie as hardest as she could. He had long arms and he was obviously stronger than her, but Agata was determined to at least give him a rough time before she could lose. But, as she looked at Richie to taunt him, she saw him giving her an expression that she has never seen before—was fond? Gentle? Agata didn't know what kind of face he was making, especially when he looked even more handsome without his glasses, and before she could he winked at her and deliberately let her push him off of Ben's shoulders.

When he fell in the water, everyone cheered loudly as Eddie

whooped with joy. Agata was still a little stunned but she quickly threw herself in the water to hide her blush.

"Nice one, Agata!" Beverly promptly said when the brunette resurfaced.

The two girls were getting along just fine, better yet, they were acting as if they've been friends for a long time now. Agata was so excited at the idea of finally having a female companion and Beverly was just relieved that there was at least a girl who didn't look at her in a dirty way like Greta did. Beverly was starting to see what Agata hanged out with these boys, and she hoped they would accept her as well.

They all continued swimming up the lake until they stopped again.

"So, how long have you known these guys?" Beverly asked Agata.

"I moved here last year, in July. Met Bill and Ge—" Agata swallowed a sudden painful lump, "—Richie first, then Bill introduced me to the rest of the losers."

"Losers?" Beverly asked, amused.

Agata nodded, proudly, "That's what we call ourselves."

Beverly hummed, taking in the information.

When Agata saw Bill swim towards them, Agata smiled knowingly and decided to go see how the drowning of Richie Tozier—caused by Eddie Kaspbrak—was going. She had a feeling that her leader had a thing for Beverly, I mean, Agata felt like if she was a boy she'd probably liked Beverly too.

But she liked Richie Tozier instead.

The same Richie whose face was the only thing not submerged in the water as Eddie held him down by locking his arm around the curly-haired boy's neck.

"What's the matter Rich, can't breathe?" Eddie taunted as Richie gurgled some water.

"Hello, boys! What's up?" Agata beamed as Eddie flashed her a grin.

"Nothing much, just drowning this asshole!" Eddie replied pleasantly.

"Help!" Richie laughed as he pretended to struggle under Eddie's hold.

Agata did end up saving Richie when she asked nicely for Eddie to let him go, and whilst the three began splashing each other, Stan called Eddie for some reason, leaving Richie and Agata alone. The two splashed each other some more, of course, but when Agata started coughing Richie halted instantly.

"Are you okay?" he swam towards her and gripped her shoulder as she coughed into her arm, just like Eddie had taught her.

"Yeah!" she wheezed, chortling at the same time. His hand on her shoulder was starting to burn her skin so she smoothly dove under the water to shrug it off while pretending she just wanted to wet her hair.

But Richie was still just a step away from her, looking at her in that odd, longing way again.

He was giving Agata a strange vibe ever since that game, and Agata felt compelled to explore more of it. They stared at each other for a long time, and Agata shyly hid half of her face in the water as her cheeks reddened.

She almost jumped out of her skin when he spoke.

"Aggie? I—Ah, fuck! What was that?!" his shy tone and hesitant expression shifted into a startled one as he looked down.

"Something just touched my foot right here!" Stan warned as the group started to form again, much to Agata's disappointment. She really wanted to hear what Richie was about to say and now she'd be forever curious.

Richie and Stan both dived into the water and Agata looked around with Eddie and Ben.

"Where are we looking?" Ben asked as he watched them confusedly.

Richie came up and pointed at the center of their circle, "Right here, right here!"

"It's a turtle," Bill stated after diving in as well.

"Oh! I love turtles!" Agata smiled before she went underwater, wanting to see the reptile herself.

Fifteen minutes later, all seven teens were drying off by the large rocks at the edge of the water. Because of the Summer heat, they were pretty much all dry in a matter of minutes but Beverly told Agata to lay down with her and get tanned with her for fun.

Agata was never conscious about the paleness of her skin, but maybe if she had a little tan she could be prettier. However, she went to get her sunblock first because her mom warned her about getting a sunburn. When she walked up to her backpack and retrieved the sunblock, Agata walked into her five male friends laying their eyes on Beverly Marsh's body—the redhead unaware of this since her eyes were closed.

As the radio played Rock and Roll and they lied down in a large, she glared especially towards Richie. It was like they were all under a siren's song—how ridiculous!

Agata decided she didn't want to get tanned anymore, not if she was going to get ogled like that. So, feeling too many confusing emotions that made her stomach churn, she sat down at the edge of the rock the boys were sitting, isolating herself as she grabbed her backpack and shoved the sunblock inside, taking a water bottle out of it to sip from it.

Boys are stupid! Boys are disgusting!

"Beverly, do you want some sunblock?" she asked out loud, startling the boys as Beverly sat up and took her sunglasses off to look at her.

"Thanks!" she smiled, and Agata couldn't help to smile back at the honesty behind it as she threw it at her, and Beverly caught it

between her hands smoothly. It wasn't Beverly's fault that they were staring, Agata knew that. So she wasn't going to treat her like Greta did.

"Can I have some too?" Richie asked, nervously smiling at Agata as if he was testing the waters.

"No," she dryly stated.

Wincing at her tone, Richie decided to distract himself when he noticed that Ben's backpack was open. He rummaged through it and sighed, "News flash, Ben! School's out for summa!" he teased the chubby boy with his British guy voice.

"Oh, that? That's not school stuff," Ben explained as he watched Richie grab a postcard from inside.

"Who sent you this?" the quipper asked curiously as Agata finally decided to stop moping and take a seat next to Ben's as she also curiously looked at the postcard.

"No one! Give it," Ben quickly swiped it from Richie's hands who quickly raised his hands defensively.

But he didn't learn his lesson, Richie was back at perusing through Ben's bag when he pulled out a thick, old looking book. He opened and every page was filled with cut pieces of newspaper articles, "What's with the history project?" he asked, intrigued.

He passed the book towards Agata, like a peace offering, and she took it without glancing at him. She was more interested in the articles spread all over the pages, but when she skimmed through it and realized that they were all about death, her nose scrunched up and she decided to hand it to Bill, who was closer to her.

"When I first moved here, I didn't really have anyone to hang out with, so I just started spending time in the library," Ben explained promptly, and his tone as a little sheepish. Agata smiled softly at him, she knew what was like to be the new kid in Derry but at least she had her losers by her side. She couldn't imagine what Ben went through by himself.

Richie gave Ben an incredulous look, "You went to the library? On purpose?"

"Yes, Richie. People do that," Agata wryly said.

The conversation must've brought up Beverly's curiosity, because she finally stood from her towel to walk towards the circle, "Oh! I wanna see!"

"What's the Black Spot?" Stan asked, and Agata remembered something her mom once told her.

"It was a nightclub that was burned down years ago by a racist cult," she told them with a sad expression, "My mom was in Derry when it happened, she was only nine years old and she was out in the street when it happened."

"Shit..." Eddie commented, feeling sorry for Ms. Ray. She was so nice to him.

"Y-Y-Your hair"

Agata turned her attention when she heard Bill stuttering towards Beverly. She inwardly cringed when Beverly dropped her smile as Bill's stutter refrained him from continuing his phrase.

But then Ben spoke up.

"Your hair is beautiful, Beverly," the timid, chubby boy complimented her.

Agata sensed some sort of jealousy happening between Ben and Bill—she decided to get away from that and take a seat next to Richie now. He looked at her surprised, but when she smiled at him he was instantly relieved. Then, she felt dumb. Why had she been mad at him for again? Agata was stupidly confused about everything nowadays.

Her mom called it puberty.

"Oh, right thanks!" Beverly beamed at him as she consciously brushed her curly hair sideways.

Richie and Agata exchanged a look at the awkward tension before the jokester extended his arm to his leader.

"Here, pass it," when the book was back in his hands, Stan scooted closer to Richie to have a peek at it as well.

Agata, who frowned at the articles, sighed and turned towards Ben, "Why is it all murders and missing kids?" she quizzed him with an upset expression.

Ben looked at her with a haunted expression, "Derry's not like any town I've been in before," he started with a quiet tone, "They did a study once, and it turns out people die or disappear six times the national average."

Agata was officially spooked by his statement, she even felt goosebumps forming in her arms and legs as she recalled all those missing posters spread all over town. She scooted closer to Richie for comfort, and he didn't seem to mind it—even when he could smell her green apple shampoo from how close she was.

"You read that?" Beverly asked Ben.

He nodded, happy to have her attention, "And that's just grown-ups. Kids are worse. *Way*, way worse," he told them with a serious tone, "I've got more stuff if you wanna see it."

Agata looked at Eddie and saw him shake his head at the offer, and she couldn't blame at how terrified he looked.

She was scared, too. And for some reason, that clown crawled into her mind at that precise moment.

Thirty minutes later

As Agata sat on the back of Richie's bike, Eddie, Stan, Bill, and Beverly all had packed their things up and were on their way towards Ben's house, who led them slightly ahead.

Everyone let their bikes fall on the grass (for Stan, who would never allow himself to unceremoniously toss his bicycle just like that) and

Agata stayed behind with Richie as both waited for Eddie to hurry up while the others ran inside the Hanscom house.

From what Agata gathered as the three left behind went up the stairs, Ben's parents weren't home so that made her feel more at ease.

Eddie and Richie began talking about something when they were about to enter Ben's bedroom, but Agata wasn't paying attention when she noticed his walls covered with even more disturbing newspaper articles.

"Yeah, I heard he has like a rollercoaster and a pet chimp and an old guy's bones—"

"Bones?" Eddie finished for Richie with a grin.

"Yeah!" Richie nodded, but his smile dropped when the two boys finally entered the room after Agata, "Whoa, whoa, whoa" he exclaimed while adjusting his glasses and taking a look around the room.

"Cool, huh?" Ben smiled.

"Cool?!" Agata gasped as she covered her mouth.

"No. No, nothing cool," Richie snarked at Ben, "Oh, this is cool, right here! Wait, no. No, it's not cool."

"Beep beep, Richie," Agata scolded him, and he merely shrugged at her.

"What's that?" Stan inquired as he pointed at paper surrounded by antique pictures.

Ben looked at him as the others brought their attention to him as well, "Oh, that? That's the charter for Derry Township," he quickly pointed out.

"Nerd alert," Richie quipped as he smirked at the others, but he quickly dropped it when he saw Agata's exasperated face.

"No, actually, it's really interesting," Ben stated, brushing off Richie's

rude remark, "Derry started as a beaver trapping camp."

"Still is, am I right, boys?" Richie exclaimed as he raised his hand to high-five someone.

Stan gave him a disapproving look while Eddie bluntly ignored him, Agata simply chose to turn her back while she inspected the pictures around the walls. All of these people were dead—it was so creepy that Ben could sleep in this room at night.

Ben continued his brief history lesson, "Ninety-one people signed the charter that made Derry. But later that winter, they all disappeared without a trace."

That sounded like the final line at a scary story that someone would tell by the campfire—just before the jumpscare happened. But Agata did find the mystery interesting enough to peek her attention towards Ben.

"The entire camp?" she repeated, intrigued at the notion.

"There were rumors of Indians, but no sign of an attack. Everybody just thought it was a plague or something," Ben told her with a tone that showed how confused he was as well with it, "But it's like one day everybody just woke up and left. The only clue was a trail of bloody clothes leading to the Well House," he finished.

"Jesus, we can get Derry on Unsolved Mysteries," Richie stated, perplexed.

"Let's do that! You're brilliant!" Eddie complimented him with a sarcastic tone.

"I might be," Richie shrugged, unaffected.

Agata simply shook her head and smiled fondly at the two as they began their daily bickering.

"Oy vey..." Stan sighed as he rolled his eyes at them, making Agata giggle, "Why do you think he decided to show us this?" he whispered at them, trying to conceal their conversation from Ben.

"Maybe he's just trying to make some friends, Stanley," Richie told him with a rare, quiet tone.

"I like him!" she beamed at them, whispering as well, "And so does Duncan," she added.

"W-Where was the Well House?" Bill suddenly asked.

"I don't know. Somewhere in town, I guess. Why?" Ben asked him.

Bill glanced at the papers and pictures on the walls, "Nothing," he mumbled, disappointed.

And Agata knew that this 'nothing' meant that Bill wasn't going to stop until he found out where it was.

Don't forget to leave a review! Those make me happy and motivate me to write even more :)

7. Alexandra Ray's Old Friend

9:22 PM

Agata was in the middle of the first chapter of 'Jumanji' when her mom called her downstairs, saying that there was a girl on the phone that wanted to talk with her. Duncan followed his girl down the stairs, wagging his tail when Alexandra patted his head when passing by the two, returning to the living room to continue watching the new episode of 'ALF'.

Agata placed the phone on her ear and hesitated before speaking, "Hello?"

"Agata?"

It was Beverly Marsh. And she sounded like she'd been crying.

The first thing Agata thought was how did she get her house phone number, "Beverly? Is everything okay?"

"N-No, something really bad happened. I'm sorry to call you in so late—" Beverly stopped talking abruptly, and from the way she whispered on the phone Agata guessed that she wasn't supposed to be using it, *"—Bill gave me your phone number. I hope you don't mind..."*

Agata couldn't help but smile at Beverly's anxious tone, "Of course I don't mind, at least now we can talk. You're one of us now, remember?"

Beverly let out a relieved chuckle, but it sounded so forced.

"Are you okay?" the brunette asked.

"No... I called because I need you all to come to my place tomorrow. After three."

Agata frowned, confusedly, "Beverly, you sound scared. Did" the clown quickly grinned inside her mind, and Agata couldn't help but fear for her new friend, "Did something happen to you?"

"Yes. But I can't say it over the phone, you'll think I'm crazy. Just come tomorrow, I already called Bill and he's warning everyone else as we speak—I hope. Will you come?" Beverly whispered desperately.

"Of course. Losers stick together, I'll be there," Agata confirmed solemnly.

Beverly sniffed over the phone, *"Thank you, Agata. I"* she hesitated before speaking, *"Nevermind, I'll see you tomorrow."*

"Bye, Beverly," Agata whispered before the line was cut. She placed the phone back in its place and stared at it for a few seconds, wondering what Beverly wanted to tell her and anxious about what she was about to see tomorrow.

"Who was it, honey?" Alexandra asked from the couch as the episode ended.

Shaking her worries away, Agata walked up to her with Duncan by her side and stared at her until Alexandra's blue eyes drifted from the television screen to her daughter.

"That was Beverly Marsh, my new friend."

Alexandra blinked, "Oh?"

"She asked me if I could hang out with her tomorrow, at her place."

Alexandra smiled. For the first time they moved to Derry, her daughter finally managed to befriend a girl. It wasn't as if she disliked those boys that were always with her, hell, she loved them all! They welcomed her daughter with open arms and helped Agata come out of her shell. Alexandra didn't care if Agata only had male friends, but to find a female friend—that could help Agata with things that she didn't want to tell Alexandra.

A friendship between two girls was a beautiful thing.

She tried not to sound too excited when she spoke, "That's nice! Beverly Marsh, what a beautiful name. What time are you leaving?" she asked, grinning.

Agata seemed more relieved now, "She said after three. And I need to see which one of the boys is picking me up, it's probably Bill, though."

Alexandra's smile strained a little, "Oh, honey, I'm sorry I can't afford to buy you a bike. I'll try this Christmas but—"

"Mom!" Agata interrupted, eyes widening, "It's okay! I really don't mind not having one, and the boys say they don't mind giving me rides."

Her mom didn't seem convinced, but she nodded nonetheless, "Okay honey. I'll leave you lunch ready for you tomorrow, make sure you eat before you leave."

"Alright, mom!"

Agata made a move to walk back to her room again when Alexandra remembered something.

"Oh! Wait, are you taking Duncan?"

The dog in question barked as he recognized his name being said.

"Yeah, I want him to meet Bev,"

After confirming that to her mom, Agata returned to her bedroom, feeling a little too thoughtful to continue reading her book. She wondered if Beverly was okay. Agata knew that if her life had been in real danger Beverly wouldn't have just whispered as she did, so maybe Beverly was fine—for now.

Agata couldn't focus on anything anymore. She decided to brush her teeth and tell her mom she was going to sleep while beckoning Duncan to join her. The family's pet followed after the teen dutifully and took his place at the end of Agata's bed, as usual.

She also grabbed the journal that her mom gave her on her birthday and decided to write on it. She's been doing it ever since March, just a month after receiving it, but she's been writing more and more after her encounter with that clown.

When she was finished, Agata placed it under her pillow and turned off her lamp, letting her room be illuminated by a street light that stood right in front of her house, she couldn't help but wonder why the clown had chosen to show up in the old toolshed from her backyard—she only knew that it was still locked, as if Pennywise had never broken the doors when scaring her.

She closed her eyes and took comfort by feeling Duncan lie his head on her feet, and slowly, sleep consumed her into a dreamless night.

Not noticing the street lamp flickering until its light vanished.

2:22 AM

Alexandra yawned as she turned off the television, finally feeling tired enough to go to sleep. She stood up from the couch and stretched her limbs, and after yawning again, she grabbed the plate from a sandwich she prepared an hour ago as a snack and took it to the kitchen, putting it in on the sink to wash it tomorrow.

As she was about to turn around, she heard a rumbling sound coming from outside.

There was a small window directly in front of her sink, so she had access to the view of her backyard—she looked around, mildly wary but still too sleepy to be fully alert.

When all she heard was a single cricket stridulating into the night, Alexandra shrugged it off and turned to leave again. Only, when she was passing by her backdoor towards the hall that led to the stairs, a sound as if many heavy objects tumbled down a shelf came from outside—from the toolshed.

Gasping, she quickly unlocked the backdoor and stepped outside, staring at the toolshed.

The light was turned on, and the door was slightly ajar, enough for Alexandra to feel anxious. Her first thought was to call the police because someone was breaking into her toolshed—but then she remembered: that shed is old, too old for its lightbulb to work. And it

looked freshly painted with a sickening yellow color that reminded Alexandra of her childhood.

She suddenly gasped loudly when a shadow appeared on the gap of the door, it was standing there, staring at her as the bright light above the figure covered them with darkness.

"Girl! Come here!"

"Fuck!" Alexandra cursed. That voice, the sharpness of it and the authoritative tone—that was her grandfather, "Fuck, fuck!" she wasn't stupid enough to believe it was actually him, but this was so much worst than believing that was she was witnessing was a ghost haunting her—this was so, so much worst.

"Bitch! Go fetch me a beer and get your ass over here!"

"Shut up! Leave me alone!" she yelled, not caring if the neighbors heard her. Alexandra was shaking, not only from fear but from shock as well, "Stay the fuck away—you fucking clown!"

"Clown?" her grandfather giggled childishly.

Alexandra backed away into her home, she was slowly closing the backdoor again, eyes widened as she kept them on the toolshed. Then, the door opened completely. And from inside, marching slowly towards her with cartoonish movements, the clown stopped pretending to be her grandfather while it grinned hungrily in her direction.

She made eye contact with its glowing yellow eyes as it was standing in the middle of her backyard, its stare kept her frozen on the doorway, her blue eyes widening as the clown lifted a hand to wave at her, fully animated and janky in the worst ways.

IT almost didn't look real. IT couldn't be real. But IT was.

And Alexandra, as an adult, realized that monsters *are* real.

"Hello there Alex! I've missed you so much!" it giddily greeted her, drool sliding down the corner of its red lips, "Look at how much you've grown!"

Alexandra frowned scornfully, and then shut the backdoor at once, locking it too while believing that it would keep the monster out.

Pennywise frowned at her, almost like a disappointed parent would, "Oh~ C'mon now! That's not the way to greet an old *friend*!" it laughed, jumping to stand in front of the door now.

"Where are you going, Alex? I thought we were gonna play! COME BACK AND PLAY WITH PENNYWISE!"

Alexandra looked up at it, she grasped onto the doorknob and stared at its bright eyes. It was real. Her memories now returned fully—back to that night in 1962 where she had been humiliated by those girls and was walking home alone, through the night. It had been the day when that fire happened too.

She wanted to cry.

When Pennywise grinned widely, showing its sharp teeth, Alexandra remembered that her daughter was sleeping upstairs, unaware of the terror happening downstairs. A switch was turned within her, and it made Alexandra feel brave and protective—there is no way she was going to allow this fucking clown to touch Agata.

"Fuck. Off," she spat at it venomously, "You're not my friend, you're a monster."

Pennywise's excited grin dropped when he stopped smelling her fear, "No NO! FEAR ME!" it yelled, almost desperately.

"Never! Go fuck yourself you clown!" she barked, her breath quickening as adrenaline took over, "I'm not scared of you! Not anymore! I'm no longer that little girl you manipulated, and I won't let you touch Agata either, you fuck! So go fuck yourself right into the hellhole you crawled from!"

Pennywise's golden eyes turned crimson as he gave her a dark look, "You smelled so good before. But now? You stink. You repulse **me**. You disgust **me**!" its voice raised with each insult, and he started banging its fists on the glass door, "**YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS ALEX! YOU OWE ME A MEAL! YOU ARE MINE TO EAT! YOU AND YOUR**

DAUGHTER AND THOSE CHILDREN ARE ALL MINE TO FEAST ON! FEAR ME! FEAR ME! FEAR ME!"

Alexandra screamed, not because she was scared, but because Pennywise began banging its head on the door, trying to break it with each word.

"You can't come in! The locker is keeping you out!" she yelled at it while holding onto the knob, "GO AWAY! FUCK YOU!" Alexandra closed her eyes as Pennywise kept banging, louder and louder, "It's not real—it's not real—it's not real—"

The air settled into quietness.

She opened her eyes and stared into her backyard—Pennywise was gone. But the glass was slightly cracked, proving that she didn't hallucinate the encounter.

"Mom?"

Alexandra let out a startled gasp as she turned around to see Agata, rubbing her eyes sleepily as Duncan quickly approached, growling at the backdoor after sniffing it.

"What's going on?" Agata asked, still a little dazed from being abruptly woken up by her mother's screams.

Alexandra made a quick choice as she was careful with her words, "Oh, nothing sweetie. A raccoon was trying to get inside the toolshed," she turned towards the German Shepard, who looked like he was about to bark warningly as it growled, staring at the backyard, "Duncan! Don't you dare to bark!"

Agata watched her mom grab Duncan by his collar and guide him back to the staircase, "Mom?"

"Now, you two go upstairs and go back to sleep," Alexandra said as she let out of her pet to smile at her daughter, "Go on now, you have to go to Beverly's tomorrow, right?" Alexandra didn't know how long she could keep smiling as Agata stared at her with an odd expression. She was trying to keep it together, refraining her hands from shaking too much as she kissed Agata's head before she returned upstairs.

When alone, Alexandra sat on the couch and turned on the television again. But she wasn't watching whatever was on it—her eyes were sunken, matching her thoughtful expression—as Alexandra started planning on how to leave Derry as fast as possible before that clown could hurt Agata.

She knew this wasn't fair.

She dragged Agata here, and her daughter was probably going to hate her from separating her from her friends—her first friends nonetheless. But Alexandra couldn't stay in this town knowing that a monster lurked in the shadows, inducing fear onto children before it ate them.

With her savings, there was no way they could just pack up and leave tomorrow. Then what? They'd be homeless and live in her car until the bank came to retrieve it.

No, she needed to be responsible.

She sighed with a defeated expression as her body sunk into the couch—it was hopeless. Who was she kidding? She invested everything in this stupid house, Alexandra was stuck in Derry and there was nothing she could do about it.

All she could do is hope that her daughter would never have to face Pennywise while Alexandra tried to find out how if there was a way to kill it.

3:17 PM

Duncan sauntered closely near Richie's bike as Agata sat behind the messy-haired boy, her arms wrapped around his torso tightly as he laughed, feeling the wind on his face.

The rest of the losers were riding next to him, all of them keeping up with each other without leaving anyone behind.

"Good boy Duncan!" Richie laughed as he watched the dog with admiration.

Agata laughed, looking at her dog with an affectionate smile. It seems that Richie's cheering seemed to have boosted Duncan's speed, he was now running in front of the bikes, and everyone began cheering at one.

"Holy shit! Go, Duncan!" Eddie hollered.

"Wooo!" Stan laughed.

They passed many streets and even the kissing bridge, but eventually, and after ten minutes, they reached the apartment complexes where Beverly lived in. Agata felt a sense of similarity when she saw the buildings, even though they weren't as tall as the ones in New York City it was, in a way, comforting.

"We should've gone the other way!" Eddie suddenly told the group.

"No, we gotta go through the alley!" Richie stated.

"The alley takes too long!"

"No, the alley is so much faster!"

"The alley is more dangerous and it's disgusting!" Eddie retorted.

"How is it more dangerous?" Richie asked, rolling his eyes.

"It smells like piss and it's gross!" Eddie yelled, "Just take the side streets for once!"

Agata sighed, hiding her face on Richie's back exasperatedly as Stan rolled his eyes in the same manner.

"Oh my God," the curly-haired boy groaned, "The side streets are the same! They smell like piss and shit!" Stan told Eddie.

Not wanting to admit defeat, Eddie ignored him and changed the subject, "Can you just tell me what she said exactly?"

"She didn't say anything," Stan answered, "She just said that you guys needed to hurry."

"She sounded scared," Agata inputted.

But Eddie wasn't having it, "She didn't say anything. Okay, okay," he nodded his head, thinking this was a terrible idea.

As they approached the back of the complex where Beverly told them to show up, Agata spotted the redhead already running towards them with a haunted expression—that couldn't be good.

Eddie dropped his bike first, startled when Beverly suddenly was right in front of him, out of breath and speaking quickly, "You made it. I..." she looked at them, trying to calm down, "I need to show you something," Beverly promptly.

"What is it?" Eddie asked carefully.

"More than we saw at the quarry?" Richie asked playfully.

Agata scoffed, getting off of his bike quickly before glaring at him, "Beep beep, Richie!" she raised her voice, and everyone stared at her with shock because she had never raised her voice so angrily at them.

Agata regretted it instantly as she saw Richie stare at her with widened eyes—she had no idea why she yelled at him like that. Or why did his comment irritate her so much? Was it because it implied that Richie had enjoyed gawking at Beverly's body like an ogling dumbass? Why? Because Beverly had breasts and she didn't? Did Agata even want Richie to look at her like that?

Agata wanted to scream at her mixed emotions, they were changing her.

She cleared her throat and calmed her expression, "That's not a nice thing to say to a girl," she quickly excused, praying that it would work.

It did. Richie's features relaxed but it was clear that he was still confused about her outburst.

"Yeah, Richie! Just shut up!" Eddie barked at him in defense of Beverly and Agata.

Duncan approached Beverly and began sniffing her feet, and the redhead quickly started patting his head as she continued talking to the group, "My dad will kill me if he finds out I had boys in the apartment," she explained, addressing why she insisted for them to meet her in the back of the building.

"We-We-We'll leave a lookout," Bill assured her, "Richie, s-sta-stay here," he told the boy before the rest of the group dropped their bikes and followed Beverly towards the stairwell.

"Duncan, stay with Richie boy!" Agata ordered her dog, patting him in the head as she passed by the German Shepard.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! What if her dad comes back?" Richie asked out loud, finding the whole situation unfair.

"Do what you always do. Start talking," Stan snarked at him.

Duncan barked, moving towards Richie to sit next to the boy dutifully.

"It is a gift!" Richie agreed, calling after them and making Agata smile as she climbed the stairs.

They got inside Beverly's apartment and Agata suddenly felt cold, she also decided that it was too dark and the vibe that it transmitted wasn't homey at all. The group followed Beverly as she walked down the hall, and when she stopped walking to point at her bathroom door Agata noticed that Beverly looked like she was afraid to take another step towards it.

"In there..." she quietly told them.

Agata was standing between Eddie and Ben, but she could see the door between Beverly and Bill—and it looked as if a red light was beaming from the other side. It was strange, but scary as well. She read a book about colors before, and the color red always means danger. That door was like a sign that something dangerous had happened on the other side, and Agata couldn't help but grab Eddie's hand when they began walking towards it—and the other squeezed her hand as well, both comforting each other.

"What is it?" Bill asked.

"You'll see," Beverly somberly told him.

"Are you taking us to your bathroom?" Eddie began panicking, "I just want you to know that eighty-nine percent of the worst accidents at home are caused in bathrooms. And, I mean, that's where all the bacteria and fungi are i-it's not really a sanitary place," he rambled, squeezing Agata's hand even tighter when Bill reached for the doorknob to twist it open.

She hushed him gently, "It's okay Eds, we're here," she tried to sound assuring, but Agata's voice trembled a little as a look of horror took over her face when Bill opened the door fully.

It was terrorizing.

They all saw blood, glowing brightly while covering every inch and edge of the bathroom's floor and walls. It was everywhere. The bathtub, the toiler, the sink, the mirror and even on the window and curtains—there wasn't a space in the room where Agata didn't see being soaked with blood.

She almost felt bile come up from her stomach and the smell hit her nostrils, But Agata simply gagged and covered her nose and mouth with her free hand, looking around with widened eyes.

"I knew it!" Eddie whined, stepping behind Agata without taking his hand from hers before he gagged as well.

"Do you see it?" Beverly asked them, hopefully, and fearfully. It was if she was scared that only she could see the revolting scene before them.

"Yes..." Agata softly replied, giving her an appalled look as she uncovered her face.

"What" Stan began, but he had to pause to try to keep his voice from cracking, "What happened here?" he asked.

"My dad couldn't see it. I thought I might be crazy," Beverly replied.

Ben scoffed lightly, "Well, if you're crazy, then we're all crazy."

"We c-c-can't leave it like this," Bill asserted, bravely taking the first step and walking inside the bloody bathroom as he looked around with a thoughtful expression.

Agata felt Eddie letting go of her hand, and when she looked at him he was giving her a pleading look—she smiled knowingly and shook her head, mentally telling him that they were doing exactly what he feared that they were.

She didn't know how long it has been since they all grabbed every cleaning product they could find in the sink's cabinet and began scrubbing and washing the bathroom from top to bottom. Agata and Eddie were in charge of the floor, whilst Stan was with the window, Ben and Bill the walls and Beverly took care of the mirror and sink—all blood collected was being dumped in the bathtub so that would be the last thing they'd clean together.

Agata, as she used a mop to absorb the blood from the tiles, heard Eddie cry as he squeezed the blood from his cleaning rag into one of the buckets, keeping his inhaler inside his mouth the entire time as if it was an oxygen mask. She smiled sadly at him but in a sense, she also felt that this could be good for his hypochondria and that even though the whole thing was messed up, she felt that this was an experience they could bond over—strengthening Beverly's position within the club.

An hour or two must've passed when the bathroom's glowing red light disappeared, letting the sunlight from outside clear the room's negative energy into a normal looking bathroom.

Agata smiled, feeling relief when she dumped one of the buckets covered with blood into the bathtub and watching it disappear down the drain brought a better mood into her each time. She then followed after Stan and Eddie when they walked out to throw away the garbage bags filled with blood-soaked rags that could no longer be re-used, she grabbed a bag as well and was about to grab another when Ben beat her to it, smiling kindly at her.

"Thanks, Ben!" she grinned before walking out, hearing Ben following

as well.

However, she did stop hearing his steps when she almost reached the kitchen, so she decided to look back. Ben was exiting Beverly's bedroom with a soft smile, and even though she found that strange and wanted to scold him from going in there without Beverly's permission, she also saw him halt—staring into the bathroom again.

And his expression was now sad as his eyes stared longingly ahead of him.

Agata could only guess that look was for Beverly Marsh.

She felt intrusive, so Agata turned around and continued on her way to put the bag on the garbage. She was having a mental debate if she should try to approach Ben and ask if he was okay. She didn't want him to feel as if she was trying to forcefully pry anything from him, but Agata cared about her friends and just because he has only been around for two days it didn't mean he was less than a friend to her.

"Hey, you good?" Eddie asked, suddenly materializing next to her after she dumped the garbage bag into the can.

"Jesus! Eddie, you scared me!" she gasped, covering her heart.

He raised his eyebrows, "Sorry, I was just checking up—also, here, put this on your hands," he unzipped his fanny back and grabbed an anti-bacterial gel bottle from inside.

"Eddie..." she sighed, but he gave her a look that she could describe as puppy eyes and Agata could never resist his big, brown eyes. She gave up and raised her palms in his direction, and Eddie happily poured a decent amount of gel in her hands.

"You'll thank me!" Eddie beamed, putting some on his hands as well.

Stan joined them and gave Eddie an exasperated, but fond look that made Agata smile from amusement.

Agata didn't know what Bill and Beverly talked about, but when they returned, Beverly seemed to be in a much better mood as her eyes looked fondly to each Loser—and there Agata knew, that she was

now officially one of them.

After meeting up with Richie again, Duncan was properly introduced to Beverly and the two adored each other right away. Agata knew this would happen because of Duncan's great sense of finding out who's good or bad.

But now, even after when they left the apartment complex behind, they had to endure Richie's trashmouth.

"No, I love being your personal doorman, really!" he sarcastically stated as he circled the group with his bicycle as everyone walked, "Could you idiots have taken any longer?!"

"All right, sorry Richie but beep beep" Agata sighed, walking between Eddie and Beverly as Duncan barked, stalking behind his owner.

"Shut up, Richie!" Eddie shouted over her, tired of hearing him complain the whole way.

"Yeah, shut up, Richie," Stan parroted, starting to get annoyed as well.

"Oh, okay, trash the trashmouth, I get it!" Richie retorted sourly, "Hey, I wasn't the one scrubbing the bathroom floor imagining that her sink went all Eddie's mom's vagina on Halloween!"

"She didn't imagine it," Bill stated, stopping his tracks while the rest of the Losers did as well.

They all looked at him, waiting for their leader to continue as Richie's pressed the breaks of his bike, staring at him as well.

"I s-s-saw something, too," Bill continued, but Agata noticed that he seemed hesitant to tell them this.

"You saw blood, too?" Stan inquired as everyone listened attentively. It was like a collective understanding had crossed over the teens, except for Richie, who could only glance between his friend's faces with a confused expression.

Bill paused for a moment before he finally looked at Stan, shaking his head, "No blood," he answered quietly, "I saw Ge-Ge-Georgie."

Agata suddenly felt a pang of pain in her heart at the mention of the little boy's name, and she almost walked up to Bill to give him a tight hug, "Georgie?" she repeated, her throat suddenly dry at how shocked she sounded.

"It seemed so real" Bill continued anxiously, "I mean, it seemed like him but there was this" he trailed off, trying to find the correct word to describe that

"The clown," Eddie supplied, his voice meek and frightened. They all looked at him in surprise, and he nervously looked around before avoiding their eyes to stare at the street, "Yeah, I saw him too," he confirmed.

Agata hugged herself, reminiscing about her own encounter with Pennywise, "Me too, in my mom's toolshed," she admitted, sensing their eyes on her now.

Bill looked around, and when he saw all of them, except for Richie, nodding at him with serious and scared expressions it was all he needed to confirm that they all went through their own encounter as well.

"Wait, can only virgins see this stuff?" Richie commented cheekily, "Is that why I'm not seeing this shit?"

Eddie rolled his eyes and looked away, but then he noticed a car parked by the edge of the woods that led to the quarry, "Oh shit, that's Belch Huggins' car," he warned them quickly, "W-We should probably get outta here."

"Yeah..." Agata agreed, not wanting to run into Bowers and his friends after hours of cleaning a bloody bathroom.

"Wait, isn't that the homeschooled kid's bike?" Bill suddenly asked.

"Yeah, that's Mike's," Eddie confirmed.

And when Agata looked at the bike fallen on the dirty, with the

familiar basket where he usually put the meat whenever he was delivering it to the butcher shop, her eyes widened as she began fearing for his sake.

When her mom took her to the shop to buy meat for the week, she encountered him there, delivering packages of lamb meat to the owner. The two didn't speak to each other but when Mike Hanlon looked at her, Agata offered him a friendly smile—which he shyly returned.

He seemed nice. And Agata quickly forgot the fear she had about Bowers and was now ready to go help him.

"We need to help him, Bill!" Agata said with an alarmed voice.

"We should?" Richie gave her a skeptical look.

"Yes!" Beverly exclaimed, thinking how many times Bowers had terrorized her at school.

It was decided then.

Whoever was holding a bike let it drop unceremoniously on the road as Agata ran ahead with Duncan and Beverly following soon after, and as she ran inside the forest with them, her heart dropped when she heard angry shouts nearby.

She felt Richie quickly run to stand by her side, and the two exchanged a look before they arrived at the place the Bowers Gang had chosen to torture Mike.

Agata was disgusted at the sight of Henry pinning Mike down by sitting on his chest, and she quickly held Duncan by his collar before her dog could cross the small stream separating the groups — she didn't want Henry to find a way to hurt her dog.

And as Henry was about to hit Mike in the head with a large rock, she quickly noticed Beverly pick up a rock from the ground and throw it at Henry, hitting him in the head.

Duncan began barking, making Belch jump as his friends stared at the Losers with shock.

Agata's eyes were on Mike, and she cringed at how badly hurt he looked.

"Nice throw!" Stan complimented Beverly as the rest of the group arrived.

"Thanks," Beverly said, smiling at him.

As Bill and the others began collecting more rocks from the ground for protection, Agata noticed that Mike used the fact that his bullies were too stunned from what just happen to even care that he was escaping, he ran towards the stream, almost losing his balance in the water as he desperately tried to reach for the group that had just saved him.

"Duncan, sit!" Agata ordered with a serious tone. No matter how much she wanted Duncan to attack those psychopaths, she knew they could all hurt her dog. She knew Victor has already killed dogs before, it was just a rumor but with him—it had to be the truth.

Duncan obediently sat down, growling threatening as he stared at Henry and his goons as Agata walked down the small hill to meet Mike halfway, and when his arm reached for her Agata quickly grabbed it, helping him stand and walk up the hill to join her friends.

"You're okay now, we got you, Mike," she whispered gently as he tried to calm his panicked breathing.

"You losers are trying too hard," Henry suddenly said, and when Agata looked at him, he was bleeding from his forehead—where Beverly's rock had hit him, "She'll do you," he continued, staring at Beverly with a smirk, "You just gotta ask nicely, like I did," then, Agata almost looked away when Henry grabbed his crotch, squeezing it towards Beverly in a sexual manner.

It was vile. He was so disgusting.

Suddenly, and startling everyone, Ben let out a scream full of rage towards Henry and quickly threw a rock at the bully, surprising everyone and hitting Henry's head with a perfect aim.

"What the fuck?" Henry exclaimed, backing away into Victor.

Agata saw her friends' face, she knew what was about to happen. She quickly gathered Mike in her arms and helped him sit between bushes so he could be safe—Duncan quickly joined Mike, licking his face as a greeting and comfort and Mike, who was still shaken, welcomed the dog's attention but hugging Duncan closely.

Satisfied, Agata then grabbed three rocks from the ground and stood between Stan and Beverly, her face filled with determination for what was about to happen.

Beverly threw another rock as well, inspired by Ben, and filled with resentment for the times Henry had tormented her with sexual comments.

Finally realizing that the Losers weren't intimidated, Henry started picking up rocks as well, "Come on, get 'em! Fuck!" he barked angrily at Belch and Victor, who obeyed quickly.

"ROCK WAR!" Richie hollered before he got hit in the face by a rock Henry threw at him.

Agata gasped, "Richie!" she screamed, then, she glared at the gang and threw one of her rocks as hard as she could—and it hit Belch right in his throat. She didn't celebrate too quickly because she yelped when a rock almost hit her shoulder.

"Get 'em!"

"Watch out!"

Agata had no idea who was winning or losing, she just kept throwing rocks with her friends towards Bowers and his monkeys and tried her best to dodge any incoming rocks flying in her direction. She especially aimed towards Henry and mentally cheered each time her own ammo hit that mullet asshole—one particular hit him in his crotch and Agata couldn't wait to boast about that when this was all over.

Eddie suddenly jumped from the small cliff into the stream, bravely and quiet ragefully throwing rocks towards their enemy—and Agata had to admit that she was impressed by his actions, but at the same

time, all she wanted was to grab him and bring him back to where he was safer.

Still, adrenaline was pumping into her body each time she threw a rock so she couldn't help to get a little excited.

"Take this!" Agata screamed, throwing a rock that hit Belch right on his nose—making the chubby teen groan and drop his ammo.

"Fuck! You bitch!" Belch growled before he grabbed a rock and threw it at her, Agata gasped, it was coming so fast towards her that didn't have the time to dodge it—it hit her right in the stomach, getting the wind knocked out of her.

She bent down, grasping onto her stomach as she tried to regain her breathing again.

"AGGIE!" Richie screamed, "YOU MOTHERFUCKER!" He bellowed at Belch, seeing red now. He skipped around the rocks and joined Eddie on the stream, also throwing even larger rocks at the three teens who bullied him for years.

"Agata!" Eddie gasped, looking back at his friend with a shocked expression before he too let out a revengeful scream and worked together with Richie to cover Belch in rock marks, "FUCK OUTTA HERE!" he screamed angrily as Belch didn't even have the time to throw the rock on his hand while trying to cover his head from the rocks Richie and Eddie threw at him at a fast pace. It was two against one.

"Ow!" he exclaimed, dropping the rock.

Agata was now able to breathe better, and she felt a pair of hands helping her to stand up. It was Stan, and he was giving her a concerned look while everyone kept fighting.

"I'm fine" she coughed, smiling weakly before grabbing another rock to throw.

"Agata—"

Mike suddenly rose from his hiding spot, feeling both guilty and mad

from what just happened to Agata, and quickly threw a rock he had found. Duncan joined them too, quickly running to stand between Richie and Eddie in the stream and he barked dangerously close to the gang.

Victor and Belch both looked at the dog with fear as Henry was hit by Mike's rock, which sent him to the ground after hitting him hard on his head.

"Ah, shit!" Victor cried.

"Fuck you, bitch!" Belch yelled at Beverly, but he was instantly met with a rock in his face by the redhead.

Agata saw Henry tried to stand up again, and she wasn't going to allow it when she threw a rock at him, hitting his back hard and making his body drop on the ground again.

"Come on, guys! Let's get 'em!" Eddie encouraged his friends.

Despite the pain she was still feeling, Agata laughed and threw another rock, this time at Victor and his stupid bleached blond hair.

That seemed to have been his last straw, "Fuck this!" he yelled before running away, leaving Henry behind with Belch when the larger teen also decided to give up, following after him.

Now that Agata noticed, Patrick Hockstetter wasn't with them. But she didn't mind that one bit.

"Fuck out of here!" Richie yelled, watching them run.

They all stopped throwing rocks, watching Henry slowly raise his head to give them an expression that Agata thought it could be of fear and surprise. But they weren't sticking around anymore, she saw Richie approach her from her side as Eddie walked back to assist Stan with helping Mike up the small hill, towards the forest path where they came from. Duncan followed after Richie, whining when he was close to his owner.

"Aggie?" Richie asked, eyeing her body with concerned eyes behind his thick glasses.

She smiled softly at him, and even though her chest still ached a little, she grabbed hold of his hand and began following after their friends, "I'm fine Richie, I'm okay," she assured him lightly before patting Duncan's head with her free hand, "Let's go, boy," she told her dog, who proceeded to give one last growl towards a stunned Henry before he stalked after the Losers.

He stopped though, and turned towards Henry with an angry face, "Go blow your dad you mullet-wearing asshole!"

Agata smiled and looked away to chuckle a little.

It was clear that Richie was still upset by her being hit during the rock war. Both didn't look back to watch Henry stand up, they didn't care enough. Richie could only squeeze Agata's hand, realizing that the brunette didn't let go as they walked back together.

And something inside his chest celebrated it, but deep down he knew if Agata found out his secret, she'd wipe her hand away from him with disgust.

As they walked down a hill, with a train passing by on the rail bridge behind them, Agata's cheeks reddened when she finally let go of his hand to walk ahead of him, between Stan and her crush. She tried to distract herself by feeling the tall grass on her legs or by hearing Mike's sudden statement.

"Thanks, guys, but you shouldn't have done that. They'll be after you guys too, now," Mike said with a solemn tone, feeling guilty as he thought he had doomed these kids that just helped him. He was still surprised to see Agata Ray with them—he still remembers meeting her at the butcher shop, and Mike sometimes would catch himself thinking about her blue eyes while working on the farm.

Eddie, who was leading the group in front of Bill with Duncan by his side, turned to look at Mike with an easy smile, "Oh, no, no, no—Bowers? He's always after us," he assured the other casually, looking back ahead to make sure he wouldn't trip on a rock.

"I guess that's one t-thin-thing we have in common," Bill added, glancing towards Mike to give him a quick, friendly smile.

"Yeah, Homeschool. Welcome to the Losers Club!" Richie proclaimed with an accepting tone.

Duncan barked, welcoming Mike as well.

Agata, who felt giddy about having Mike Hanlon with them, couldn't help but voice her opinion as well, "We're all your friends now, Mike!"

He looked back at the sound of her soft, feminine voice and smiled shyly, "Thanks, uh, Agata."

Richie's grin dropped as he looked between Mike and Agata, and suddenly Mike's presence stirred something new inside the trashmouth.

The Losers Club was now complete, but their troubles were just beginning.

8. Investigation Gone Wrong

July 4th, 1989

Agata couldn't believe they were already a month into summer vacation and the only thing that happened was a scary encounter with a clown. Well, if Agata wanted to be positive she also thought about gaining two new friends and an official clubhouse that was secretly situated in the Barrens—underground.

Ben found the already dug up hole days ago and he took the losers there just after the rock fight. He'd be working on it before—reinforcing the walls the panels, get the wood for the roof door and even using a ladder as the stairs. Making the place homier wasn't a problem for the losers, they brought in posters and Richie his boombox and Agata couldn't help to bring in her poster of Michael J. Fox, her recent celebrity crush. She didn't care if Richie teased her about it, even though the actor was twenty-eight years old she would never forget watching the 'Back to the Future' movies and not sigh dreamily at Marty McFly.

When Alexandra heard about this clubhouse she gave Agata old blankets that they never used and also she came back from the store with extra dog bowls and food for Duncan to have in the clubhouse in case Agata took him with her. And now Duncan had his own corner in there, where he rested while watching over the losers.

Today, however, Duncan stayed home while Alexandra and Agata went to the forth of July parade. They decided not to bring their dog because of the loud noises and the crowd—and because Duncan was afraid of firework and the kids in this town always managed to get their hands on them and prank bystanders.

The two were having fun, they got some cotton candy and then participated in some games that allowed Alexandra to get a stuffed panda for Agata. And when Agata went to use the restroom inside a small coffee shop, Alexandra waited outside while looking around.

She couldn't help but smile sadly—do these people know what lurks in the shadows? Could this happy day end in another tragic death of

another child?

"Hey Ms. R!"

Alexandra's shoulder shook a little at the sound of the sudden, chirping tone. She turned her head to see Richie Tozier coming her way with Eddie Kaspbrak by his side—who glared at Richie for being loud.

She couldn't help but smile fondly at the two of the closest friends of Agata, "Hello boys! Enjoying the parade?"

Eddie looked at her and nodded, "Yes, we actually called your house to see if Agata could come out. We're all meeting up later," he told her with a light tone. Eddie really liked Agata's mom, she was cool and pretty. And she also didn't coddle Agata much as his mom did. Eddie didn't want to admit it but he was kind of envious of Agata for having a better mom than he did, but it wasn't like he resented her. Even though his mom had talked trash about her. *'Don't talk to that Godless woman! She was never married and is raising a child on her own! What type of mother leaves their kid unsupervised because of work?'* Eddie didn't believe his mom. And he also didn't care if Agata never met her father—Alexandra Ray was a good woman.

"Can Aggie still come?" Richie added, grinning up at the woman. Richie thought that Alexandra had to be the nicest mom he'd ever meet. It was good to know that at least someone had a decent parent. He could also see the similarities between the two, and if this is how Agata was going to look like as an adult then Richie's heart thumped at the thought of even still be in her life by the time they're forty years old. He hoped that'd be that case—but when he thought about it, his parents weren't friends with the same kids they met during middle school so part of Richie feared the future.

"Of course she can, I already had her for almost all day and I gotta go home check on Duncan," Alexandra said, "But take care of my little girl, okay?" she added with a motherly tone.

"Ms. R, please, I'm her knight in shining armor—I will protect her with my life!" Richie exclaimed with a courteous tone, making Alexandra grin with amusement.

Eddie, however, rolled his eyes.

"Always the funny one, Richie, you do it so well!" she praised, and Richie fixed his glasses with a rare sheepish look.

It was one thing being complimented by one of his friends but when an adult did it? That was more credible.

"Why, thank you, my Queen," he bowed his head while using his British accent.

"Richie shut up," Eddie hissed at him while Alexandra laughed merrily.

She curtsied, "You are very welcome, dear sir," she retorted, using an English voice as well.

Both Eddie and Richie awed at her, but the messy-haired boy was the first one to let out a guffaw. This is why he liked Agata's mom. She was so cool!

The door from the store behind them jiggled and they all watched as Agata walked out of it, instantly beaming at the sight of her friends.

"Hi, guys!" she greeted happily.

Richie stared a little. She was wearing a cute denim shirtdress that reached her knees (with knee-length white leggings underneath), with split short-sleeves and a comfy crewneck, and a braided brown belt wrapped around a waist. Her long hair was hairstyled with boxer braids and Richie noted that it wasn't the first time she'd wear her hair like that.

He grinned, trying to avoid his cheeks from warming up.

"Hi Agata, you look nice!" Eddie complimented her with a friendly smile.

Agata smiled shyly, "Thanks Eddie," then, she looked at Richie expectantly, "Richie?"

"Uh?" he mumbled, blinking dumbly at her from behind his glasses.

Agata's smile didn't drop, but her eyes did flash a hint of disappointment, "Nothing," she perked up again, eyeing Eddie, "What are you guys up to?"

"They were asking me if you could go with them, apparently your little club is gonna meet up," Alexandra answered instead, amusing to what she just witnessed between Richie and her daughter. She'd always knew that after spending so many times with the boys, a crush would eventually come up, but what Alexandra was surprised at was that Richie was apparently the boy Agata chose. That that she disliked the way, but perhaps she misjudged her daughter completely—she always thought Stan or Bill would be her type.

Alexandra was wrong.

"Oh! Really? Can I go?" Agata asked, giving her mom puppy eyes.

Alexandra nodded, "Of course, I'll go back home though," she watched as Agata celebrated before joining Richie and Eddie, "Oh, sweetie, do you have ice cream money?" she remembered Agata asking for it before using the restroom.

"No worries, Ms. R, I owe Aggie dear ice cream, it'll be my treat!" Richie quickly stated as Agata giggled.

"Oh, you remembered!"

"Of course he did," Eddie mumbled.

Alexandra smiled warmly at the boys, "Okay, if you insist Richie. Thank you—and also, Agata, I want you home before seven. Understand me?" with a more serious tone, Alexandra made sure that she was very solemn about her request, "You too, boys! Just because it's the fourth of July doesn't mean that" *that the clown won't kill you*, "the curfew isn't lifted. Understand me?"

Using her motherly tone, both boys nodded their heads dutifully.

Satisfied, Alexandra smiled at the three and waved goodbye at her daughter when they began walking down the pavement, headed towards where the rest of the losers club was. And Alexandra watched them leave with her heart on her throat, nervously looking

around and not noticing a red balloon floating right behind her.

When the eight losers got together, they all gathered in an alley to talk more privately while Eddie and Agata went to the nearest ice cream vendor to get their cold, sweet treats. Richie did give money to Agata for her to purchase a strawberry ice cream—her favorite was mint and chocolate but the vendor did have, as he stated rudely, "those modern tasteless flavors", but she felt a little guilty when there wasn't enough to buy Richie one as well.

Then, after purchasing his vanilla ice cream with sprinkles, Eddie surprised her by buying another one for Richie.

"I knew it, you do like him," she teased him, bumping shoulders with him.

He blushed, "N-No! I just don't want to hear him bitch about it!"

She decided to spare him from even more teasing as the two made their way back to the group. And Agata had to smile fondly when she saw Richie messing with a trump player—enough to catch the said player taking his musical instrument from Richie, who was playing it horribly.

"What the fuck, dude!" she managed to hear Richie exclaim as the guy walked away.

"What are you guys talking about?" Eddie asked as they walked up to them.

Agata took a lick from her melting ice cream and grinned when Richie approached and Eddie instantly handed him the ice cream he bought for him. No words were exchanged between the two, it was like it was a natural occurrence.

"What they always talk about," the other complained.

And Agata frowned, of course, they had to bring up the disappearances. She thought they were going to enjoy the parade together. She guessed wrong.

"I actually think it will end. For a little while, at least," Ben stated with a thoughtful expression.

"What do you mean?" Beverly asked him, intrigued.

It seems that Ben has been doing more investigation on the manner, so Agata paid close attention to his words as she licked her ice cream. What she didn't notice was the quick, nervous glances from Mike.

"So I was going over all of my data research and I charted out all the big events. The Ironworks explosion in ninety-O-eight, the Bradley Gang in 'thirty-five, and the Black Spot in 'sixty-two. And now the kids being" he didn't finish because he looked at Bill and faltered a little at the silent mention of his little brother, but the way he phrased his explanation was enough to hint at the group what he meant, "I realized that this stuff seems to happen—"

"Every twenty-seven years," Bill finished at the same time Ben did.

"Oh..." It was scary to think that her mom could've been killed by that clown twenty-seven years ago. She couldn't imagine a nine-year-old going against that monster.

They all looked at each other with understandably spooked expressions.

Agata suddenly was uncomfortable by being in an alley, so she suggested them to go to Bassey Park and take a seat in front of the Paul Bunyan Statue, where a stage with many dancers and clowns giving free balloons to children and various families were enjoying their picnics and gatherings.

The three had already finished their ice cream cones on their way here. So they were all sitting on a single bench while Richie, Eddie, and Bill rested against their bikes. Agata was sitting next to Beverly. The two had grown closer throughout the weeks after her inclusion within the group. They had a lot in common, not just because they were the only girls but because only they could talk to each other about subjects that the boys would childishly deem as 'disgusting' or that would just make them visibly uncomfortable.

Beverly found some solace in Agata. And when she invited the redhead for dinner, Alexandra was thrilled to have her as a guest. Beverly almost feared that Agata's mom wouldn't like her because of the rumors but she quickly learned that Alexandra Ray knew how this town worked because she had once escaped from it.

The two now shared a bracelet that had 'BFF' carved, and they didn't care that they only knew each other for less than a month. Their bond was made and nothing could break it.

"Okay, so, let me get this straight. IT comes out from wherever to eat kids for like, a year, and then what? IT just goes into hibernation?" Eddie asked confusedly, but also anxiously.

"Maybe it's like, what do you call it Cicadas," Stan speculated, "You know, the bugs that come out every seventeen years?"

"My grandfather thinks this town is cursed," Agata looked at Mike when he suddenly spoke up, his tone serious, "He says that all bad things happen in this town are because of one thing—an evil thing that feeds on the people of Derry."

"But it can't be one thing," Stan tried to reason, "We all saw something different."

"Maybe. Or maybe IT knows what scares us most, and that's what we see," Mike continued, gazing into the distance with a thoughtful look.

"I-I-I saw a leper," Eddie stated with an uneasy voice, "He was like a walking infection," he added. And Agata could see the haunting experience through Eddie's widened eyes.

"But you didn't," Stan insisted, sounding like he was trying to convince himself more than the others, "B-Because it isn't real. None of this is," everyone looked at him doubtfully, "Not Eddie's leper, or-or Bill seeing Georgie, o-or the woman I keep seeing—"

"Is she hot?" Richie suddenly asked with a lop-sided smile.

Agata gave him an incredulous look.

And Stan's expression also shifted from a cautious one to an angry

awestruck, "No, Richie! She's not hot!" he snapped sharply at him, making the other grimace, "Her face is all messed up. None of this makes any sense! They're all like bad dreams!"

"I don't think so—I know the difference between a bad dream and real life, okay?" Mike asserted with a flash of familiarity crossing his eyes.

Agata saw it, "What did you see?" she paused when everyone looked at her, "You saw something, too?" she asked him with a gentle tone. Not wanting to sound too demanding. She was more worried about him than curious about his experience with that monster.

Mike seemed to calm down under her gaze as he responded, "Yes," he paused, gulping in his fear and convincing himself that it was fine, he could trust them, "Do you guys know that burnt house on Harris Avenue? I was inside when it burned down. Before I was rescued, my mom and dad were trapped in the next room over from me. They were pushing and pounding on the door" he grimaced at the memory, and Agata frowned sadly as he continued, "trying to get to me. But it was too hot. When the firefighters found them the skin on their hands were melted down to the bone."

"Mike" Agata softly whispered. She felt nauseous, terribly sorry for what Mike had gone through, "I'm so sorry..."

He smiled sadly at her, "Thanks," and then sighed, closing his eyes for a moment to regain the strength to continue making his point, "We're all afraid of something."

"Got that right," Richie told them as he looked behind him, towards the stage.

"Why, Rich? What are you afraid of?" Eddie questioned curiously.

He stared at the stage for seconds before he turned back to them, straightening his glasses again in a nervous manner, "Clowns," he stated sourly. And that day, Agata learned something new about her crush.

She also realized that his fear couldn't be worst. He said that he

hasn't witnessed anything odd or scary yet, and she prayed that he didn't. Because if Pennywise knew that his fear was clowns, then it would've been too easy for that monster to terrify him.

Forty Minutes Later

5:45 PM

When Bill told them he wanted to show them something related to the topic they were discussing, everyone re-grouped back at his place—more like his garage.

Agata took her place between Richie and Eddie as she watched Bill set up the projector on a table right in the middle of the garage, and Agata couldn't help to wonder how rich Bill's parents were to afford a projector. She didn't even know how to turn one on, and in awe, she watches Bill work on it until the wall was covered with the projector's screen.

Mike closed the garage door to seal down the remaining light coming inside as Stan covered the windows with a blanket. She had to admit that being in the dark like this was making her nervously already, but, as she felt Richie's arm brushing against hers, Agata felt a sense of comfort as well. She watched as Eddie helped Bill out with setting up everything while Ben handed Bill a slider from inside his backpack.

The poster that Ben had of an old version of the map of Derry appeared in the wall ahead of the group, and Agata squinted her eyes a little as Bill adjusted it to match the recent map, and she realized that it also showed the sewer system of the town in the form of red lines.

"Okay," Bill started, "Look" he pointed at a drawn circle labeled as the storm drain Georgie disappeared. Agata shifted uncomfortably, "T-That's where G-G-Georgie disappeared. There's the Ironworks and The Black Spot. Everywhere it happens, it's all connected by the sewers."

Agata's eyes widened when she realized Bill was right—her blue eyes wandering throughout the red lines until it reached "The Well House!"

she exclaimed.

Bill looked at her, "It a-all meet u-up there," he confirmed.

"It's in the house on Neibolt Street," Stan said tensely.

"You mean that creepy-ass house where all the junkies and hobos like to sleep?" Richie asked out loud.

And at that, Eddie suddenly brought his inhaler to his mouth to suck in deeply of it, making both Richie and Agata look at him worriedly as he let out a dry, panicked cough. She quickly leaned towards him, resting a tentative hand on his back.

"I hate that place. It always feels like it's watching me," Beverly commented with a distant look.

"That's where I saw IT," Eddie told them weakly, his voice slightly raspy, "That's where I saw the clown."

"T-T-That's where IT lives," Bill told the group, and Eddie took another puff into his mouth.

"I can't imagine anything ever wanting to live there," Stan said with disgust as he recalled the house.

Agata jumped when Eddie abruptly stood from his seat, turning to look at the group while quickly walking towards the front to stand in front of the projector, "Can we stop talking about this?! I-I-I can barely breathe, this is summer, we're kids—I can barely breathe! I'm having a fucking asthma attack!" he anxiously shouted at his friends, "I'm not doing this!" he decided before turning around and rip the map from the wall.

"What the hell! Put that map back!" Bill exclaimed.

"Eddie, calm down" Agata softly told him, knowing that his asthma could only get worse if he panicked.

Eddie gave Bill a defiant look as he shook his head, "Mmm-mmm!"

Just as when things were about to escalate, the projector started

going to the next slide by itself, showing new pictures—Bill's family pictures—passing by at a fast pace.

"What happened?" Bill wondered, staring at it confusedly.

"What's going on?" Agata whined fearfully. She started looking around in a paranoid manner, suddenly feeling unsafe even though she was surrounded by her friends.

The projector kept showing pictures of when the Debrough family was happy, with Georgie still alive and always smiling gleefully in each photo. Agata would've thought it was cute, but due to the circumstances, it was creepy and hard to look at.

Mike quickly stepped in and tried to see what the problem was, "I got it, hold it," he mumbled to himself as he did the best he could to fix the machine, "Guys..." he warned as the slides started going faster.

"Mike, don't touch it!" Agata hissed worriedly, afraid that something would happen to him.

The projector then stopped on a certain picture—it was a photo of the family with Georgie holding hands with both his parents in front of the church.

"Georgie," Bill stated sadly.

The picture was now being zoomed in on Georgie's face, and it was happening really fast. Agata felt Eddie tug the back of her shirtdress to back her away slightly, but it didn't help to relieve her fear.

"Bill?!" Stan called out nervously, not knowing what to do.

All they could do was watch as the projector zoomed faster by the second, but shockingly, it shifted towards Bill's mom—whose hair was moving as if a strong breeze of wind was passing by. The projector was going to fast-paced now that the picture started to look more like a video recording, and her face was beginning to shift into IT!

"What the fuck?!" Eddie yelled.

"It's IT!" Bill shouted as everyone began reacting to the face of the clown replacing Sharon Denbrough.

They were all freaking out, not knowing what to do as the reality of the monster crashed upon their frail, imaginative minds.

"What the fuck is that? WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT?!" Richie screamed, grabbing Eddie's arm and bringing him closer in a protective manner as the jokerster witnessed the clown's appearance for the first time. He was hysterical and with good reason.

"I DON'T FUCKING KNOW!" Eddie let out a shrill scream as he held onto Richie as well, both trying to keep each other strong.

"IT'S IT! THE CLOWN! OH MY GOD!" Agata screamed, full-on panicking right not as she grabbed the nearest person towards her, "OH GOD IT'S HERE!"

Richie glanced at Agata worriedly but he was glad Mike was with her—he could watch over her while he kept his eyes on Eddie, who was shaking like a leaf under his arms as he screamed with everyone else.

"Turn it off! Turn it off!" Beverly yelled urgently.

"Yeah, yeah!" Mike suddenly said, understand Beverly's idea. He guided Agata towards Richie and Eddie—the latter instantly placed her between the two—and quickly moved towards the projector, "Turn it off, turn it off!" he repeated before he kicked the projector.

Everyone watched it crash on the concrete floor from the garage. The light was still on, and now pointing at the wall in a crooked way.

Agata was catching her breath, her heart hammering loudly and too quickly to hurt a little on her chest, but she was still wary of IT's presence—even though IT no longer showed up on the screen.

Then, when Richie grabbed her shoulder and was about to tell her something, the losers heard another side start to switch again, showing a distorted photo of IT—and it looked angry.

As a slide would go, the lamp would turn off and on.

On, the clown was there.

Off.

On, the clown was there.

Off.

Everyone was gasping, breathing heavily and still shaken up from what just happened. But everyone knew that it wasn't over, they all stared warily at the wall with fearful expressions.

On.

The clown popped out of the wall, now giant-sized and with a wide, toothy grin filled with sharp fangs and a predatory look in ITS golden eyes. Agata screamed and scrambled with everyone else further away as possible, she couldn't even hear her own screams as her friends.

"Run, Stanley!" she heard Richie yell.

And Stan didn't need to be told twice, he had been the closest to the projector so IT could've just snatched him up and gobbled him down like nothing—but IT was playing around with IT's food.

Agata tripped on one of the stool's legs and fell on her knees, then, she heard loud thumping coming her way and looked up to see Pennywise crawling towards her swiftly, grinning merrily as he eyes her hungrily.

"**MY MEAL! MINE!**" he growled, towering over her as she let out a pitchy scream that certainly would make her throat sore—if she survived this.

"**NO, SHE'S FUCKING NOT!**" Richie bellowed, throwing a chair at the back of IT's head, "**FUCK OFF!**"

The lights from the projector's lamp kept blinking, giving the garage full darkness for at least three seconds. It didn't seem much but when you were stuck with a monster it was enough for you to get caught.

Pennywise was distracted by Richie's audacity that IT accidentally let

Agata run back to his friends, who pulled her up immediately and formed a protective shield in front of her, cornering her behind them as she sobbed her heart out, shaking from fright. IT grunted, and then looked IT's eyes onto a lamb that they forgot to guard.

Beverly Marsh—sweet Bevvv.

IT crawled towards her and growled, sounding like a lion and extending IT's arm to reach for her body while she was hopelessly trapped between IT and the wall behind her.

"Beverly!" Stan cried, fearing for her life.

"NOO! BEV!" Agata sobbed, trying to get to her whilst Richie didn't allow it.

Beverly could only cover her face with her hands as she sunk to the floor and hope for a painless death—but then Ben and Mike keenly opened the garage door, letting in sunlight and making IT vanish completely afterward.

They all looked around, confused and terrified with what just happened.

Agata hugged herself, and then she walked straight towards Richie—who quickly hugged her close to him. No words were exchanged between them, there was no need.

She watched as Beverly walked up to Ben and rested her hand on his shoulders, "Thanks, Ben," she told him earnestly, eyes still widened as she made her way to Bill to give him a tight hug.

Ben avoiding looking at them as the two embraced, comforting each other. And Mike did the same, because even though he knew Agata liked Richie and she could never like him back—and he was happy for both of them—it still hurt to see.

"Mike, your arm!" Agata suddenly gasped, half-breaking her hug with Richie to look at him gripping it painfully, "Are you okay?"

Mike managed to give her a weak smile, "m fine."

She didn't seem convinced, but there were other matters to discuss now. For example, her face was too close to Richie's and her crush seemed to realize it as well—the two self-consciously unwrapped their arms from each other but remained close, scared to even be apart after the recent encounter.

"IT saw us," Eddie began, voice elevating as he began panicking again, "IT saw us, and IT knows where we are!" he exclaimed, looking at Bill with frightened eyes.

"IT always did," Bill stated, "S-S-So let's go," he walked out of the garage, towards where they left their bikes on the floor and turned to look at them.

"Go?" Agata repeated numbly, "Go where?"

"Neibolt," he replied with a determined look in his face, "That's where G-G-G-G-Ge-Georgie is..."

"After *that*?!" Stan questioned astonished.

"Yeah, it's summer, we should be outside..." Richie continued, making Agata nod and Bill scowl.

"If you say it's summer one more f-f-*fucking* time," he spat before they all watched him grab Silver and ride it towards the road.

"Bill!" Agata tried calling, scared that he'd really go to that house by himself.

"Bill, wait!" Beverly joined, not wanting him to get hurt too.

But he ignored them, and Agata knew that as soon as their leader and friend disappeared around the corner, they'd follow him.

Agata just hoped to be back home before seven. Or alive.